MUSLIMS OF INTEREST

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MUSLIMS OF INTEREST: PRACTICES OF RACIALIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE

WAR ON TERROR

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LAY ABSTRACT

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This project is timely and important because stereotypes about Muslims are important in justifying Western intervention in the Middle East as part of the US-led "War on Terror". Most recently, Donald Trump's presidential campaign and early presidency illustrate the power of negative perceptions of Muslims, as illustrated by his proposed policies and widely spread societal and political support for a "Muslim ban". Thus, it is important to think critically about the relationship between popular culture and world politics.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the stereotypes of representations of Muslims in American popular culture, and specifically in television dramas and comedies. These tropes include: 1) the Muslim terrorist/villain; 2) the patriotic "Good" Muslim; 3) the Muslim "friendly cultural stereotype"; and 4) the Muslim victim (both of Western discrimination and of patriarchal "Muslim culture"). This research is also interested in portrayals of Muslims that resist these stereotypes.

Taking a performativity approach based on Critical Race Theory and intersectionality, this research is interested in the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. Following the aesthetic turn of International Relations theory and falling within the subfield of Popular Culture and World Politics, this research takes popular culture seriously as a site of politics because representational practices are important in informing politics and societal relations at local, national, and global levels. This dissertation conducts a discursive content analysis of every American television program from 2001 to 2015 that features Muslims as main and/or recurring characters, including *Homeland, 24, Sleeper Cell,* and *The Grid.*

This project is timely and important because constructions of identities, including through performative reifications of stereotypes in popular culture, both influence and are influenced by foreign policy. Narratives about Muslim-ness are important in justifying Western intervention in the Middle East as part of the US-led "War on Terror". Most recently, Donald Trump's presidential campaign and early presidency illustrate in a visceral way the currency of negative and reductionist perceptions of Muslims, as illustrated in his proposed policies and widely spread societal and political support for a "Muslim ban". Thus, it is important to think critically about the relationship between popular culture and world politics.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

An increase in racism and discrimination targeting Muslims has been a distinguishing feature of the new millennium, which is frequently referred to as the post-9/11 era, defined by the so-called "War on Terror". While the events of September 11th, 2001 should not be credited as changing the world so profoundly as to mark a new era, they have been thusly narrated and this framing has cast a shadow over international politics, society, foreign policy, and the very discipline of International Relations for over fifteen years. This project explores some of the dynamics of the "War on Terror" by breaking apart portrayals of Muslims in a prominent site of popular culture – television dramas and comedies. While television is far from the only site at which the "War on Terror" is narrated and in which Muslims are represented, this project explores some of the most sustained characterizations of "Muslim-ness" by focusing on a medium that permits the development of characters over many hours of programming.

This project is important and relevant in the context of the 21st century wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; the continued existence of and focus on international terrorism; and increasing instances of violence, hate speech, and other societal tensions spurred by anti-Muslim sentiment in the Western world, including Canada, the United States, and Europe. For example, increases in the rates of hate crimes against and the suspension of legal rights of Muslims are very troubling (Alsultany 2012: 4; Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xx). Reductionist stereotypes of Muslims are particularly important because of the context in which they are viewed: "against a montage of real-life images and reports of terror attacks (successful and thwarted) across the globe, of videotaped beheadings and messages from Al-Qaeda, of the killing of American soldiers, journalists, and civilians in Iraq" (Shaheen 2008: xi). For the current context we could add the dissemination by ISIS/Daesh of beheadings and other violent acts. This context is particularly important because in times of armed conflict there is even less resistance to racist

stereotypes than at other times (Shaheen 2008: xii). Despite some ebb and flow of Western concerns about Arabs and Muslims, there has been remarkable continuity in negative and reductionist perceptions of Arabs and Muslims in preceding decades and centuries (e.g. Said 1979, 1993, 1997/1981; Shaheen 2009/2001).

Artefacts of American popular culture have been chosen as the primary source objects of study for this project because of the far reach and widespread popularity of American productions beyond the borders of the United States. Due to the large volume of American television shows, this is an appropriate corpus to study, so as not to generalize from too small a sample, as well as because the attitudes promoted in American pop culture play a role in perceptions of Muslims in other countries, including Canada.

Popular perceptions of Islam and Muslims are relevant to many aspects of Canadian politics and society; the traction of the debate on the *niqab* in the 2015 Canadian Federal Election illustrates how preoccupied the Canadian public is with markers of Muslim-ness, even on a question such as the wearing of the *niqab* at citizenship ceremonies or in the public service, which directly concerns only a very small portion of the population.[1] This event followed closely on the heels of the debate on the proposed Quebec Charter of Values, which evidenced a strong

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[1] In 2011, the *niqab* was banned at citizenship ceremonies; the issue returned to public attention after it was challenged by Zunera Ishaq and eventually overturned by a federal court in 2015. Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) re-affirmed their support and efforts for banning the *niqab* in citizenship ceremonies; the ensuing debate became a central feature of the 2015 election debate and was prominent in the news cycle. Although this stance was credited with increasing support for the CPC leading up to the election, it was followed by a proposal for a "barbaric cultural practices" hotline in early October 2015, a proposal which was widely criticized and considered a major mis-step by the CPC leading up to federal election on October 19th. The CPC lost to the Liberal Party of Canada by a wide margin, seeing their 166 seats won in the previous election reduced to 99, and the Liberal Party winning a majority government with 184 seats. Wherry and Patriquin (2015) provide an example of discussions of the 2015 federal election in the news media. Thanks to the 2016-17 race for the leadership of the CPC, this topic has returned to the fore, not least because one of the candidates, MP Kellie Leitch, had originally proposed the "barbaric cultural practices hotline". Trump's election to the American presidency in November 2016 has helped to revive discussions about immigration and screening based on "national values" in Canada.

focus on the rejection of religious symbols, not exclusively – but not least – around Islamic symbols.

These two events are part of a larger trend of preoccupations around Islamic garb in Canada, the United States, and Europe, following in the footsteps of France's "affaire du foulard" in 1989; thus, while the obsession with "Muslim clothing" and other markers of "Muslim-ness" is not new, it has intensified since 2001.[2] Trump's presidential campaign in 2015-16 and early presidency in 2017 illustrate in a particularly visceral way the power of negative stereotypes and broad generalizations about Muslims. Most infamously, Trump called for a ban preventing Muslims from entering the US (e.g. Johnson & Weigel 2015) and within days of his inauguration had already begun to implement such legislation (Scott 2017). While these are examples of overt discrimination targeting Muslims, such cases are embedded in and made possible through networks of less visible processes and institutions of systemic racism. This rhetoric is also accompanied by increasing security measures regarding the surveillance and detention of Muslims in the context of the "War on Terror", not limited to, but most famously reflected in, the American PATRIOT Act. Concerns about security and combating terrorism remain prominent in the foreign policy of the United States and many other countries, not least because of the prominence of ISIS/Daesh in the global news cycle. The "War on Terror" has increasingly become part of the mundane and thus may recede from attention and interest, but the "security" measures and negative perceptions of individuals and groups profiled as potentially threatening remain active and powerful. Such security measures have been studied elsewhere in greater detail and are not the focus of this research.[3]

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[2] More recently, the summer of 2016 saw the ban of "burkinis" – or swimwear that provides full body coverage – in various parts of France. After a significant global backlash, this ban was lifted (Dearden 2016).

[3] For example, on biometrics, see Muller (2010); on pre-emption see Stockdale (2015); on risk see Amoore & de Goede (2008), Aradau & van Munster (2007).

There have also been notable cases of resistance to anti-Muslim racism, such as the insertion of Arabic graffiti on *Showtime*'s *Homeland* decrying the program's racist and reductionist portrayals of Islam, Muslims, and the Middle East, according to the artists who painted the graffiti on the show's set (Phipps 2015). Protests also swiftly followed Trump's announcement of a ban on individuals from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia (Scott 2017).

From my positionality as a White, Western scholar, it should be noted that I do not presume to make any pronouncements on Muslims or Islam, per se, but rather aim to unpack how Muslim-ness is (re)produced or performed in popular culture and popular discourse. Because of the international popularity of American television, although these artefacts emerge from the United States, they have social and political impacts around the world. For instance, according to Bell Media (2015), in 2015 all ten of the most-watched dramas in Canada and nine of the ten most-watched comedies were American programs. For a listing of the most popular American television programs around the world in 2015, see Adalian (2015). *Homeland*, discussed at length in this project, features as a popular program in countries including Sweden, the U.K., and Argentina (Adalian 2015). Canada also follows American trends, such as in upsurges in hate crimes against Muslims: for example, following Trump's announcement banning the entry of people from several Muslim-majority states in January 2017, there was a rash of hate crimes against Muslims in the United States (e.g. torching of a mosque in Texas; Newton 2017) and a shooting at a mosque in Québec City in Canada (Williams 2017).

This project is a continuation of and contribution to ongoing critical research and analysis of the important role of pop culture in defining collective and national identities and societal attitudes vis-à-vis certain groups that are seen as "Other", or not belonging to the projected

mainstream identity of the national collectivity. In particular, this research continues in the tradition of works such as Jack Shaheen's *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2009/2001) which illustrates the consistently negative portrayal of Arabs in Hollywood films, and Edward Said's *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (1997/1981) which discusses the impact of the media on popular understandings of Islam and the Muslim world.

This research assumes that "television mediates the War on Terror" (Alsultany 2012: 20) and plays a role in shaping public perceptions, societal relations, and foreign policy. Alsultany reminds us that "representations of Arab and Muslim identities in contexts that have nothing to do with terrorism remain strikingly unusual in the U.S. commercial media" (2012: 28). Even the rare cases of plots that have nothing to do with terrorism cannot help acknowledging the popular association of Muslims with terrorism, whether the Muslim character is a teenage exchange student (*Aliens in America*), a lab assistant to a forensic anthropologist (*Bones*), or a hotel handyman (*Whoopi*). Moreover, one frequently finds that even films and television programs "that otherwise have nothing whatsoever to do with Arabs or the Middle East contain gratuitous slurs and scenes that demean Arabs" (Shaheen 2008: xiv). Counter-terrorism dramas, meanwhile, keep the trauma of 9/11 fresh in the American imaginary (Alsultany 2012: 45) and capitalize on a perceived sense of threat (Alsultany 2012: 46). While these dramas are sometimes lauded for exploring various political perspectives on the "War on Terror", they do tend to reinforce a "preferred meaning" (Alsultany 2012: 49): for example, torture is critiqued but ultimately justified on *24*, and racial profiling is regretted but deemed necessary on *Homeland*. That pop culture can both reinforce and critique American policies of the "War on Terror" illustrates that, despite the failure of the war in Iraq (e.g. the embarrassment of declaring "Mission

Accomplished" in 2003; domestic and international criticism), faith in the "War on Terror" was shaken, but not defeated (Der Derian 2009/2001: 272).

It is important to study representational practices or narratives not only because of their impact on world politics, but because such endeavours can be practices of resistance. As Laura Shepherd has argued, drawing on the work of Milliken: "If we can analyse them, and understand them, if we can understand how narratives are constructed to have meaning, then maybe such narratives can be changed" (2012: 126). Problematizing aspects of everyday life that are often dismissed as "mere" entertainment and not politically significant can be challenging, but is important according to an "aesthetic ethicopolitical approach" to International Relations, of which Shepherd argues that "[i]t demands that we think carefully, critically, uncomfortably, about our world(s) – even when we're 'only' watching television" (2012: 127).

Although the post-9/11 period is the one under study, this does not imply that representations of Muslims are either new or radically different as compared to pre-2001. It has been argued that 9/11 did not suddenly create a new historical moment, but is embedded in a longer history (Alsultany 2012: 9). Morey and Yaqin argue that we are only in the latest phase of a story that extends back to the Crusades and beyond (2011: 5). Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) illustrates continuity between orientalism during the time of colonization and the tropes that endure today. Justifications of military interventions in the Middle East are reminiscent of orientalist stereotypes that justified colonialism by suggesting "their" inferiority and need to be ruled by "us" (Said 1993: xi). Said also notes that since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, representations of Arabs have been "crude, reductionist, [and] coarsely racialist", and that popular culture, through films and television, negatively portrays Arabs as "sleazy 'camel-jockeys,' terrorists, and offensively wealthy 'sheikhs'" (1993: 36). In the context of the so-called

"War on Terror", it is the "Muslim", rather than "Arab", marker that is more relevant in inspiring fear in American media and pop culture, although these tend to be subsumed into the same character as the American imaginary assumes that all (or most) Arabs are Muslims, and vice versa. Representations of Arabs usually portray them as Muslim, and Shaheen argues that filmmakers "balk at projecting reel[4] Christian Arabs" (2008: xiii). There is no single, monolithic "Arab" identity, just as there is no monolithic "Muslim" identity; both reflect myriad influences and are discursively constructed as unified concepts and created through their very invocation (e.g. Naber 2011: 84). Although at some historical junctures other Muslim groups have taken centre stage (e.g. Iranians in the 1970s and 80s; Said 1997/1981), since the 1990s there has been a strong relationship between Arab-ness, Muslim-ness, and threats to the United States in the American imaginary. This framing dichotomizes American-ness, on the one hand, and Arab-ness and Muslim-ness on the other, as fundamentally irreconcilable (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxi-ii). In the context of the "War on Terror", "Muslim-ness" is particularly privileged as the threat *par excellence*, and "Muslim cultures and traditions become innate characteristics that permanently mark Muslims as belonging outside the polity" (Razack 2008: 16).

This work follows in the footsteps of excellent research that has explored representations of Arabs and Muslims in popular culture. As Shaheen's (2009/2001; 2008) and Said's (1997/1981) research discusses, while it is increasingly taboo to overtly discriminate against most ethnic groups in North American society, Arabs and Muslims seem to be the exception to this rule. Shaheen's work shows that negative stereotypes of Arabs have circulated in Hollywood for over a century (2009/2001; 2008). Of the thousand-plus films featuring Arab characters reviewed by Shaheen, only a very small number depict Arabs in a positive way: he "uncovered only a handful of heroic Arabs" (2009/2001: 16); his "Best List" includes only fourteen titles

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[4] Shaheen contrasts "real" Arabs with "reel" – or cinematized portrayals of – Arabs.

(2009/2001: 579); and even his "Recommended Viewing" list, which, according to Shaheen fulfils the modest demand that "young people may view them without being ashamed of their heritage" (2009/2001: 20), contains only 57 titles (2009/2001: 579), or approximately 5% of the total. Since well before 2001, "Arab-as-Enemy movies helped fuel misperceptions and prejudices", especially in "Kill-em-all films" such as *True Lies* (1994) and *Rules of Engagement* (2000), which "depicted us as perfectly good angels killing them perfectly evil infidels" (Shaheen 2008: xix); this reflects a pre-9/11 widespread Islamophobia (Shaheen 2008: 8).

This research focuses specifically on Muslims, rather than Arabs, Arab Muslims, or another intersecting group, because non-Arab Muslims (e.g., Pakistani, Iranian, Western converts) receive a treatment similar to that of Arabs in popular culture (e.g. *24, Sleeper Cell, Homeland, The Grid*). This research builds on Shaheen's work by extending the focus to all Muslims and seeks further insights in a different data set – television programs rather than cinema.

It should be noted that the great strength of Shaheen's work is its breadth – he reviews over 1000 films, aiming to include every Hollywood movie featuring Arab characters, whether in a major or minor capacity. However, related to this impressive breadth, Shaheen's work has been critiqued as remaining overly superficial and that portrayals are too easily deemed "positive" based on meagre improvements in stereotyping compared to worse offenders (Semmerling 2006: 3). For example, Semmerling takes exception to Shaheen's inclusion of the film *Three Kings* in his "Best" list, arguing that it still denigrates Arab characters and constructs them as fundamentally "Other" (2006: 3, 161). The present research aims to combine breadth – through the coding of a large volume of content including nearly 300 characters – and depth, as I also

provide ample qualitative discussion of many case studies according to the archetypes of Muslim-ness that the numerical component helps to reveal.

Alsultany's *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11* (2012) is an important and insightful work; I am greatly indebted to Alsultany's research and build on it in this project. The central puzzle motivating Alsultany's book is the surprising prevalence of sympathetic portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in the post-9/11 period, in which it would not have been surprising to see further stereotyping of these groups in the context of the "War on Terror", and especially as negative stereotypes about them had already been circulating for many years (2012: 1-2). There is no shortage of portrayals of Muslim terrorists: a number of programs did capitalize on the opportunity to show sensational threats, in programs such as "*24, Sleeper Cell, NCIS, JAG, The Grid, The Agency, LAX, Threat Matrix*" (Alsultany 2012: 2).

Alsultany also noted the surprising presence of portrayals of Muslims as innocent victims of post-9/11 discrimination in programs such as "*The Practice, Boston Public, Law & Order, Law & Order SVU, NYPD Blue, 7th Heaven, The Education of Max Bickford, The Guardian* and *The West Wing*" (2012: 3). Some took this as indicating great progress against racism (Alsultany 2012: 4). Shaheen agrees with Alsultany on the presence of positive portrayals of Arabs and Muslims, noting that while a majority are negative, they are accompanied by more balanced and nuanced portrayals than were previously present, including heroic characters; women who are not merely depicted as submissive; victims of discrimination; and regular people among the representations (2008: 35). Nevertheless, Alsultany notes the persistence of a set of tropes associated with representations of Muslims since 9/11, as: 1) patriotic; 2) victimized; 3) oppressed, veiled Muslim women; and 4) terrorist misogynist men (2012: 169). She notes that it is difficult to imagine Arab and/or Muslim characters who escape these moulds (2012: 169).

Alsultany finds that some exceptions are found in sitcoms such as *Whoopi, Community, Aliens in America,* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, which challenge these stereotypes by showing characters in situations unrelated to terrorism or oppression; by transcending the "Good" or "Bad" Muslim dichotomy; and/or by the presence of Muslims in leading roles (2012: 171). To this list Shaheen would surely add *Lost*: he argues that the character of Sayid is a rare exception to Arab stereotypes that have been circulating for decades (2008: 45; see chapter eight).

An important contribution of this research is to build on the work of Shaheen and of Alsultany by exploring specific characters in greater depth. Alsultany discussed broad themes of post-9/11 programming including in shows that feature Muslims in a "story of the week"; the present research is limited to programs that feature Muslims as major and/or recurring characters. As such, this research contributes to knowledge about contemporary practices of racialization and racialized stereotypes by providing an analysis and codification of the various archetypes that circulate in American popular culture in the context of the "War on Terror". It surveys of a very large body of material, including all programs that feature Muslim characters in a sustained or recurring way in American television since 2001.[5]

Like negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims, the obsession with terrorism is neither new nor "caused" by 9/11. Previous focus on terrorism was often focused on other contexts (e.g. conflict in Ireland), but it is increasingly used to primarily refer to Islamic terrorism. Der Derian notes a dependency on the word "terror" since at least 1992 (2009/2001: 248-49). Writing in 1989, Fortin affirmed that the "language of antiterrorism" was already "a well-established and rehearsed refrain" in American political culture and was playing an important role in the "increasing militarization of our common life" (1989: 189). Words like "terrorism",

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[5] Although efforts have been made to include every program that features Muslims as main and/or recurring characters in American television from 2001 to 2015, it remains possible that some gaps remain in this corpus; readers are encouraged to contact the author so that gaps may be filled in future updates to this research.

"antiterrorism", or "counter-terrorism", and the figure of the "terrorist" are powerful and strategically deployed in political discourse and power relations (Fortin 1989: 189). While there are certainly particularities of the post-2001 "War on Terror", Fortin illustrates that there is also great continuity: in 1989 he argued that there was much at stake in resisting "media portrayals and official condemnations of terrorism" as they unreflectively and simplistically portray political actors, producing "an impoverished and fragmented understanding of their political struggle" (1989: 190). Furthermore, such portrayals dehumanize terrorists as irrational or unreasonable and within an ahistorical framework devoid of context (Fortin 1989: 192-202). It is particularly important to critically study discourse on such sensational phenomena as terrorism because of its ability to galvanize public sentiment (Fortin 1989: 192).

Research Questions

This project asks the following questions: *How are Muslims portrayed in American popular culture in the context of the so-called "War on Terror"? What are the tropes or character archetypes involved in the representation of Muslims in American pop culture, specifically in American television programs? Are Muslims predominantly depicted according to negative or reductionist and racist stereotypes in American pop culture, or is resistance to these stereotypes an equally salient feature? What are the complexities of the "othering" of Muslims – are seemingly positive representations still "Other" and still implicated in sustaining security discourses, by emphasizing "bad" Muslims through contrasting them with their "good" counterparts? As per Critical Race Theory's concern with intersectionality, how do practices of racialization interact with assumptions about gender, class, and sexual orientation?*

Overview of Findings

The four main tropes identified in this research are that of the Muslim terrorist or villain; the "Good" patriotic Muslim; the Friendly Cultural Stereotype; and the Muslim victim (of Western discrimination and/or of "bad" Muslims). The overall prevalence of each trope is summarized in the chart below; the appendix includes a complete listing of all Muslim characters in each program, according to trope, gender, and "race".

Trope	Total	% of total	"Middle-Eastern"[6] men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Villains	119	41%	91	12	6	5	5	0
Misc. – Negative	25	8%	23	0	0	0	2	0
"Good" Muslims	35	12%	29	4	0	0	2	0
Friendly Cultural Stereotype	7	2%	5	2	0	0	0	0
Victims	58	20%	30	26	1	1	0	0
Misc. – Positive	28	10%	11	11	0	1	2	3
Misc. – Minor	16	6%	11	3	2	0	0	0
TOTALS	**288**	**100%**	**200**	**58**	**9**	**7**	**11**	**3**
% of total			**70%**	**20%**	**3%**	**2%**	**4%**	**1%**

Organization of the Dissertation

After a literature review and an overview of the methods of this research (chapters two and three), the body of the dissertation is divided into chapters according to the most commonly recurring tropes of performing "Muslim-ness": the Muslim terrorist/villain (chapter four); the

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[6] "Middle Eastern" is a deliberately broad and problematic term used because, as discussed at greater length in the dissertation, most of the programs racialize Muslims according to a constructed "Middle Eastern" identity that collapses everywhere from Morocco to Pakistan as of fairly homogenous "Middle-Eastern" provenance. This often includes fictional countries, which may be stand-ins for real countries, or composites thereof. Furthermore, "Middle-Eastern" characters are often played by actors of any background, often of South Asian descent, who are deemed to fit the expectations of racially profiling Muslims. As such, because most programs do not distinguish between "brown"-skinned Muslims of varying origins and collapse them into the same group, it is not useful to try to distinguish the different origins here, especially because the origins of Muslim characters are sometimes unspecified and/or fictional. Specific origin is sometimes indicated in the appendix if it is known and deemed to be relevant.

"Good" Muslim (chapter five); the Friendly Cultural Stereotype (chapter six); and Muslim-ness as victimhood (chapter seven). The eighth chapter discusses Muslim characters that resist or transcend the archetypes explored in chapters four through seven. The final chapter concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

IR: Aesthetic turn

This project engages with the aesthetic turn in International Relations (e.g. Bleiker 2001; Weber 2005; Shapiro 1999, 2009; Weldes, Laffey, Gusterson, & Duvall 1999; Weldes 2003a). As such, it notes the relevance of studying pop culture for understanding the connections between identity and security discourse, as significantly discussed according to Hansen's poststructuralist models of research (2006: 62). A key element of this so-called "aesthetic turn" is the questioning and breaking down of disciplinary "boundaries between 'factual' knowledge and 'fictive' representation [which] challenges the truth status of *all* disciplinary knowledge" (Shepherd 2012: 10) and assumes that reality is socially constructed (e.g. Weldes et al. 1999: 13). This is related to a broader interest among various critical approaches to challenge disciplinary distinctions and hierarchies between "high" and "low" politics (e.g. Caso & Hamilton 2015; Davies & Franklin 2015: 136; Weldes 2003: 2-5; Weber 2005: 186; Hansen 2006). Accordingly, studying pop culture may help us to apprehend some of the "margins, silences and bottom rungs" of world politics (Weldes & Rowley 2015: 25; referencing Enloe). Indeed, popular culture is important if we want to expose and challenge power relations as power is (re)produced culturally (Weldes 2003: 6). This project assumes that "*all cultural sites are powerful arenas in which political struggles take place*" and that "*[c]ulture is political, and politics is cultural*" (Weber 2005: 187-8; original emphasis). Central to the aesthetic turn has been an effort "to take popular culture seriously as a form of political communication", "not just as an object for analysis in IR but as a way in which global politics is communicated and understood" (Åhäll 2015: 71). A key example of this endeavour is Weber's *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction* (2005), in which, drawing on Barthes, she seeks to deconstruct IR theories as *myths*, or apparent truths, but which are constructions according to

which something must go without saying in order to appear to be true, or to appear as common sense (2005: 4). Weber analyzes popular films to illustrate these stories and show how these IR myths function (2005: xx). As Shapiro notes, cinema can be a vehicle to stimulate "resistance to the dominant modes of representing the world" (2009: 5).

Similarly to how Weber argues that IR theory "relies on IR myths in order to appear to be true" (2005: 2), this project explores how performances of Muslim-ness in pop culture (re)produce myths that make certain things about Muslims and Islam appear to be true. Drawing on Hall's notion of culture "as a set of *practices*" or "signifying practices" (Weber 2005: 3; original emphasis), Weber notes that culture is involved in "how we make sense of the world and how we produce, reproduce, and circulate that sense" (2005: 3). Likewise, portrayals of Muslim-ness are also involved in how we make sense of politics and society in the context of a "War on Terror". This is particularly important as much of what people "know" about world politics is based on news media and "supposedly fictional popular cultural texts" (Weldes & Rowley 2015: 18). Because storytelling and meaning-making are an unavoidable aspect of human existence, as we make sense of the world through stories (Weber 2005: 4), some question the relevance of studying these myths if they are inescapable, but Weber posits that this makes the need to interrogate and think critically about myths all the more important (2005: 8).

Although hardly part of the mainstream, the sub-field of Popular Culture and World Politics (PCWP) has been growing within IR and across related disciplines (e.g. Caso & Hamilton 2015). A watershed for the emergence of paying attention to popular culture in IR was the 1999 volume *Cultures of Insecurity* edited by Weldes, Laffey, Gusterson, and Duvall, in which they posit the "return of culture" as both an object of analysis and a source of security, arguing that "*all* social insecurities are culturally produced" (1999: 1; original emphasis).

Reflecting the influence of Campbell regarding the mutual constitution of security and identity (1998), Weldes et al. agree that insecurity is implicated in and is an "effect of the very process of establishing and reestablishing the object's identity" (1999: 11) and are particularly interested in the aforementioned cultural production of these insecurities (1999: 10). Reflecting the framing of much work that has been carried out since (e.g. Shepherd 2012: ix), Weldes et al. insist on the importance of *representations*, i.e. "narratives, collective memories, and the imaginaries that make them possible", as defining and thus *constituting* the world (1999: 14; see also Weldes 2003: 12). Weldes highlights that culture is a set of practices including representations, language, and customs in which meanings are (re)produced and thus representations and meanings can be contested; popular culture is one important element of such processes (2003: 6). Popular culture helps to provide "a background of meanings that help to constitute public images of world politics and foreign policy", thus participating in the *construction* and not mere reflection of reality; this is particularly important as pop culture can therefore be involved in helping to "produce consent to foreign policy and state actions" (Weldes 2003: 7).

Building on insights by authors such as Neumann and Nexon, this project is interested in pop culture because "[s]uch representations are not merely passive mirrors; they also play a crucial role in constituting the social and political world" (2006: 6; see also Weldes & Rowley 2015: 18-19). As Shapiro has argued, "social reality" *emerges* in the writing of the text (1989: 11). Furthermore, what we consider to be historical knowledge is *produced* (Ballinger 1999: 63). Thus, popular culture, including the television programs studied in this project, helps to construct the "War on Terror". While this work is done within the context of IR's aesthetic turn, these concerns about representation are, of course, interdisciplinary; for example, writing from Cultural Studies, Alsultany notes that "TV dramas about the War on Terror often come to stand

in for non-fictional accounts of" it (2012: 35), and, along with other modes of representation, thereby blur "the boundaries between the War on Terror and its representation" (2012: 39). This perspective also recalls Baudrillard on the collapsing of the distinction between reality and its simulacrum, or between an "original" – itself a construction that never existed – and its representation (1995; see also Alsultany 2012: 39). Morey and Yaqin also point to the "active performative involvement and constitutive role" of media coverage on the conflicts they represent (2011: 59; citing Simon Cottle) and that there is a two-way exchange between social relations and film and television representations, as "life often imitates art" and these representations have the "power … to inform social relations at a deeper level than that of mere entertainment" (2011: 112).

It should be noted that artefacts of popular culture should be seen as a form of second-order representation in that "its narratives re-present elements of social and political life through a layer of fictional representation" (Neumann & Nexon 2006: 7). These second-order representations are not to be confused with first-order representations including politicians' speeches, and television and print journalism, which seek "to directly re-present political events" and "claim to be direct representations of the 'real world'" (Neumann & Nexon 2006: 7). However, this does not mean that second-order representations are to be dismissed or considered less meaningful than their first-order counterparts as they can "model first-order political dilemmas and outcomes, disrupting and redirecting the political hopes and dreams of our own 'real' world"; thus, "second-order worlds are unquestionably part of our own reality" (Kiersey & Neumann 2015: 80). For example, Weldes (2003) highlights the complex relationship between Science Fiction and world politics.

Popular culture participates in the rise of what Der Derian (2009/2001) calls "virtuous war" because portrayals of the "War on Terror" (among other events and phenomena) participate both in entrenching the virtuality of the "war", but also engaging in normative justifications and helping to sanitize and dramatize the "War on Terror". Thrillers like *24* and *Homeland* engage in projecting "a technological and ethical superiority" (Der Derian 2009/2001: xx) through which "[t]echnology in the service of virtue" (Der Derian 2009/2001: xxvii) is used to root out and defeat the "enemy". This enemy is established with the help of binary narratives that make it difficult to critically analyse the events of 9/11 and the ensuing "War on Terror" (Der Derian 2009/2001: 229). This further entrenches the notion of American exceptionalism and the "exceptional ahistoricity" of 9/11, removing it from any historical and political context (Der Derian 2009/2001: 230). These binary narratives include an "us" versus "them" mentality, which pits "Americans" against "Muslims"; not only is this a gross over-simplification, but it ignores the intersections of these two categories, leaving individuals such as Muslim-Americans in a state of limbo in which they belong alternately to one group or the other, and thus neither.

Der Derian notes "the neo-medieval rhetoric of holy war" and a "hyper-modern war of simulation and surveillance" as characteristics of the post-9/11 era (2009/2001: 232); such elements are illustrated and reinforced in "War on Terror" thrillers such as *Homeland* and *24*. Furthermore, with the great success of such programs, among other sites, popular culture participates in one of the dangers of virtuous war: "the increasing banalization of terror *and* virtue" (Der Derian 2009/2001: 268; original emphasis). Kundnani also argues that the "War on Terror" has entered banality, as the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011 failed to end it (2014: 7).

A main goal of Weldes, who has been a pioneer in the study of popular culture in IR for the past two decades, is to contest and denaturalize existing narratives, showing that the

construction of events and their discursive significance is not inevitable, but indeed could have been otherwise (Weldes 1999: 39). Keeping in mind Derrida's deconstructive criticism is also helpful for denaturalizing myths and discourses as "every social order rests on a forgetting of the exclusion practices through which one set of meanings has been institutionalized and various other possibilities – other possible forms of meaning – have been marginalized" (Shapiro 1989: 15). Likewise, Shepherd argues that pop culture can tell us about "the encoding and decoding of meanings embedded in mainstream political discourse, and about ways of contesting powerful contemporary narratives" (2012: ix). In a similar vein, an assumption of this project is that popular culture is part of the cultural construction of the threat or insecurity posed by "Islamic terrorism" and thus has been actively involved in not only reflecting, but constructing or informing the so-called "War on Terror". Shepherd notes that practices of representation are crucial, including "how contemporary Hollywood films depict Muslims, and so contribute to the popular imagination of what a Muslim – whether 'moderate' or 'radical' – might be" (2012: ix).

Pop culture is useful to IR in a variety of ways, including being seen as "a cause or outcome in world politics" or "an element of political process in world politics"; as "a medium of inspiration for exploring themes/processes in international relations and international-relations theory"; as "evidence of ... norms, beliefs, identities"; and as "interactive with other representations of political life" (Neumann & Nexon 2006: 10). As such, in this research popular culture will be treated as a mirror of, data on, and constitutive of politics and societal attitudes that influence state policy on security policies, domestic and foreign, and particularly those treating and responding to Muslims as threatening.

The relevance of studying representations of Muslims in American pop culture in relation to American identity and security narratives is based on a foundational assumption of identity as

relational and defined according to difference and the creation of Self/Other dichotomies (Campbell 1998; Hansen 2006). In a co-constitutive relationship, pop culture is involved in shaping political identities through narratives that (re)produce "us" versus "them" distinctions and reinforce narratives of national identity and unity (Duncombe & Bleiker 2015: 36, 38, 42). As Weldes and Rowley note:

> While popular cultural constructions are not the only sites in which identities, practices, institutions, and objectives are discursively constituted, they are some of the most important. Popular culture is especially significant because we are all immersed in these discourses in our daily lives: they constitute our everyday common sense. (2015: 19)

Additionally, according to securitization theory, nothing is a threat by nature, but becomes such according to a speech act which defines something as an existential threat to a designated referent object; while the referent object has traditionally been the state, threats can fall into a variety of categories, including threats to society, which involves the threatening of established, reified identities (Buzan et al. 1998). As such, the perceived threatening nature of Muslims is involved in the creation and reaffirmation of the threat posed by Muslims to the American state, in terms of more traditional military security threats. There is also a perceived threat to a reified American identity, reflected in the depiction of American Muslims as "enemies within" who threaten the essence of "American identity" – which is simultaneously defined through contrast with Muslim elements in the United States – and by questioning the very possibility of being Muslim-American. In contrast, resistance to such narratives may also be expressed through representations of Muslim-Americans. An American television example of this phenomenon is the reality series *All-American Muslim*. Similar examples may be found in pop culture in other countries, such as Canada's *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. These programs may be seen as

arguably providing sympathetic portrayals and thus read as subversive in the context of widespread racist stereotypes. However, we should not unproblematically assume that generally sympathetic portrayals of Muslims do not also reproduce racialized assumptions, and neither should we presume that programs with largely reductionist and problematic stereotypes never resist negative views. Pop culture can both challenge and reproduce stereotypes in contradictory ways. As such, a comprehensive overview of portrayals of Muslims in American television since 2001 can help us assess the salience of and resistance to reductionist stereotypes.

Contemporary scholarship on PCWP owes a great debt to Roland Barthes. Already in the 1950s, Barthes was advocating the study of popular culture as a way of reflecting on myths of everyday life (Howard 1957/2012: vii). Additionally, ahead of the "aesthetic turn" in IR in the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholars such as Der Derian and Shapiro (1989) were turning to non-traditional sources to challenge traditional disciplinary claims about sources of knowledge and theories in IR, themselves following the lead of deconstructionists like Derrida who sought to explore meaning-making in language and to challenge binaries and associated hierarchical value-making (Gregory 1989: xv). Der Derian and Shapiro follow Barthes in considering textuality, i.e. including the historical and rhetorical dimensions of a text (Gregory 1989: xvii), and in arguing that pop culture artefacts are meaningful to study (Gregory 1989: xix). It is interesting to note that while most scholarship on PCWP has to justify why it can be considered appropriate to study pop culture artefacts such as cinema, Barthes was already doing this in the 1950s, such as in his analysis of the film *Lost Continent* (1957/2012: 184-6). Indeed, Barthes argued that myths are not only oral or written, but include any form of representation, such as cinema, photography, sports, publicity, and so on (1957/2012: 218).

Leading the way for Weber (2005) to, decades later, deconstruct myths in order to denaturalize assumptions about the discipline and theories of IR, Barthes scrutinized aspects of French popular culture, motivated by "a feeling of impatience with the 'naturalness' which common sense, the press, and the arts continually invoke to dress up a reality which, though the one we live in, is nonetheless quite historical" (1957/2012: xi). On a similar note, Enloe urges us not to accept "reality" as inevitable, but rather to be *curious* about why things are as they are (2004). Inspiring the work of contemporary scholars in IR and elsewhere, Barthes was motivated by illustrating the historical nature rather than the inevitability of social "realities", instead exposing them as "myths", or "phony instances of the obvious", and "expose in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying the ideological abuse [he] believed was hidden there" (1957/2012: xi). Barthes notes the role of insistence and repetition in myth-making, as repeated things signify (1957/2012: xii); from this we can make connections to the importance of repetition or iterability in Judith Butler's theory of performativity (1997: 5), discussed below.

Barthes also highlighted the importance of language, arguing that it functions as a code and can be politically committed (1957/2012: 153). For example, he notes that "band" has negative connotations that other synonyms for "group" do not have, implying outlaws, rebels, or civil criminals (Barthes 1957/2012: 154). In the post-9/11 "War on Terror" context, we have other powerful words that are accompanied by certain connotations and imagery, e.g. "terrorist", "insurgent", "rebel", or "cell". Der Derian notes the politics of language in the Global War on Terror, with absurd euphemisms such as "unlawful enemy combatant" or "extraordinary rendition" (2009: 247). Barthes also reminds us that not only "negative" but also reasonably "positive" portrayals of the "Other" entrench exoticism (1957/2012: 185) by implying the

existence of "eternal essences" of those represented, and thus taking them out of history (1957/2012: 186).

We can also make connections between Barthes and speech act theory, as he explains that "myth is a type of speech", as it is a "system of communication" or a "message" with historical limits and conditions of use, rather than an object, concept, or idea (1957/2012: 217). Thus, the form of a myth is more important than its substance, as it is the way in which it is used or uttered that matters, rather than the actual object of its message (Barthes 1957/2012: 217). Barthes explains that the relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified* is one of equivalence, as the former expresses the latter, and the *sign* is "the associative total of the first two terms"; for instance, roses can signify passion (1957/2012: 221). The signifier, e.g. the rose, is empty, whereas "the sign is full, it is a meaning" (Barthes 1957/2012: 222). The myth is composed of the signifier, the signified, and the sign, but it is a "second order semiological system" (Barthes 1957/2012: 223). Thus, the myth is composed of its meaning, which is full, and its form, which is empty (Barthes 1957/2012: 229), although the mythical signification is never arbitrary and "plays on the analogy between meaning and form" (Barthes 1957/2012: 236). Furthermore, a signified can have several signifiers. For instance, there were many signifiers to signify French imperiality (Barthes 1957/2012: 229).

We find in the current study that there are multiple signifiers to signify Muslim-ness, as well as to signify values associated with Muslim-ness; examples include certain aspects of physical appearance (e.g. brown skin); articles of clothing (e.g. the *hijab*); or phrases (e.g. "*allahu akbar*"). As empty signs, none of these examples have inherent meanings, but are embedded in a larger context in which they signify Muslim-ness and other associated negative implications. Because they are historically grounded, myths can shift or disintegrate over time

and according to different circumstances (Barthes 1957/2012: 230), and will thus have more or less resonance at different times and for different audiences. For example, articles of clothing that are currently associated with Muslim-ness have not always carried the same implications, nor will they necessarily be interpreted the same way in the future. Clothing is also interpreted according to geographic location and context.

Securitization theory, which draws on speech act theory, also illustrates the Barthesian legacy; Barthes explains that a myth is depoliticized speech, which gives "a historical intention a natural justification", thus making "contingency appear eternal" (Barthes 1957/2012: 254). Similarly, securitization theory contends that depoliticization is how securitization functions, as perceived threats are removed from the realm of ordinary politics and elevated to a question of survival and the realm of emergency (Buzan et al. 1998; Waever 1995). As Weber succinctly explains: "power works through myths by appearing to take the political out of the ideological" (2005: 7). As such, whether we are using the frame of securitization or the Barthesian myth, it is important to illustrate the political and historical nature of the threat (or the myth) and show that it is contingent, and not inevitable (Barthes 1957/2012: 255, 258; Waever 1995). This repoliticizes the myth so that it loses its apparent truth (Weber 2005: 7). Weber seeks to do this for myths of IR theory by turning to films to make the myth function visible and "bring the story aspects of IR theory into relief" (2005: 185).

The "War on Terror" has played a significant role in informing and being informed by popular culture in the last decade and a half. This engagement has occurred in a number of ways, including explicit portrayals of the "War on Terror" in programs such as *Homeland*; references to it in shows that are primarily about other topics, such as *The West Wing, Law & Order*, and so on; and allegorical representations, such as *The Wire*, which provided commentary on the "War

on Terror" in the guise of the War on Drugs (Shepherd 2012: ix). While the "War on Terror" has been critiqued in popular culture in a number of ways, this project is specifically interested in explicit performances of "Muslim-ness".

Calls to Take Race Seriously in IR

While the aesthetic turn of IR gives important tools and context for this research, IR as a discipline has not done nearly as well at theorizing race. IR is treated as if it were race-neutral, despite the embeddedness of race in mainstream approaches such as realism and liberalism (Henderson 2013), as well as in self-declared critical approaches. For example, Marxist approaches tend to prioritize class to the point of neglecting gender and race, while many feminist approaches remain White- or Eurocentric. IR's habit of overlooking race – both in terms of how race acts in international and domestic politics and how it is socially and historically constructed – prevents us from seeing an important dynamic that pervades international politics. As Persaud notes, it is important to "understand the modalities of inclusion and simultaneous repression of race in [IR], and how the product of this doubly constituted inclusion/exclusion has allowed the discipline to reproduce itself in the image of western man and the Great Powers" (2002: 58). Like gender, race permeates all levels of international relations, constructing hierarchies and norms that determine what characteristics, groups, and individuals are more valued than others, affecting the ideational realm of IR. It also has real consequences for the experiences and life opportunities of individuals and groups around the world, in creating structural violence and perpetuating and maintaining unequal power relations. Grovogui argues that IR has itself been racialized, referring to "the internalization by [IR] of the modern ontological discourse pertaining to civilizations, cultures, and race" and "how the 'West' became 'white' and came to exemplify cultural adaptability, political competency, and ethical versatility"

while, for example, "Africa" "became 'black' and the symbol of international dysfunction" (2001:427). Neglect of either gender or race prevents us from understanding a crucial dimension of global politics and the discipline of IR.

Feminist scholarship in IR has made important strides in addressing margins, silences, and bottom rungs, to refer to an important piece by Cynthia Enloe (2004), but race has yet to receive sustained attention and theorizing. Race is not *more* important than gender or class, but it is an equally important dimension whose neglect has created silences and reinforced discriminatory and dis-empowering relations of power in international politics and the discipline of IR. Thus, there is much to gain in recognizing the intersectionality of race, gender, and class, which produce "intersecting patterns of subordination" (Crenshaw 1991:1249).

Race remains marginal in IR. Although in recent years a number of scholars have made moves towards addressing this gap, race has been under-theorized in this discipline. Most notably, Doty (1993), the *Alternatives* special issue on race edited by Persaud and Walker (2001), and Chowdhry and Nair's edited volume (2002) have called on IR to take race seriously. However, with notable exceptions such as the recent *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* special issue on race and IR edited by Duncan Bell (2013), featuring contributions by Sajed (2013), Henderson (2013), Thompson (2013), and Shilliam (2013), among others, relatively few scholars have taken up this call, and contributions about race in IR tend to be about its general absence and the need to address this gap in the discipline (e.g. Krishna 2001, Vitalis 2000, Persaud & Walker 2001).

Doty argues that race and racism play an important role in global relations, including racially-based violence and expressions of xenophobia (1993: 443), but that we cannot take definitions of race for granted when tackling these phenomena. Instead, we need to approach

race as a social construct, like gender, whose categories are constructed more than they reflect actual "ethnic" or "cultural" differences – these terms being loaded as well. Race should certainly not be reduced to physical or morphological features "since race as a pre-ideological and pre-political category is devoid of any inherent racialized meaning" (Persaud 2002: 62). Racializations are historically and socially situated and emanate from specific political, cultural, and socio-economic contexts (Persaud 2002: 62). Doty highlights the importance of identity and difference, but specifically asks how *race* is involved in these practices of identity formation and articulation of difference (1993: 444). According to Deutsch, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to try to overcome race, as he defines it as "a built-in, rapid, inexpensive and reliable signaling device which is added to other variables including economics, ethnicity, stratification and culture" (Doty 1993: 447). Furthermore, such racial labels may not be conscious, but they are unavoidable (Doty 1993: 447). Paolini notes that modernity's quest to "overcome otherness and strangeness" is doomed to fail and will, instead, "expose ever more traces of the other" (1999: 9). Another framework seeking to reconcile "otherness" has been to approach the "problem of foreignness" (Honig 2009). IR's supposed "colour-blindness" has done more to silence marginal voices and hide structural violence and inequalities than it has promoted equality. If eliminating instinctual recognition of physical differences defined as "race" is both impossible and undesirable, as it does not change but merely obscures the status quo, we would do better to be critically aware of the ways in which race is defined and its consequences than to pretend that formal inequalities can be overcome, and therefore ignoring race as a relevant category.

We must move beyond what Doty has called "the common sense assumption that 'race' is a real and self-evidently neutral fact, not to be confused with racism which is a special

condition of a few bigots" (1993: 448). Treating racism as "exceptional" belies the extent to which racism and racial hierarchies are embedded in the global political system. Different groups are racialized in different ways, and these racializations are not static, but fluid and contingent. Ngai provides an excellent study of racism, discrimination, and exclusion of various groups in the United States in the twentieth century, particularly in the context of the National Origins Immigration Act that first introduced numerical limits on immigration (2005). If, as some gender theorists have argued (e.g. Butler 1993), sex should be seen as no more objective or "biological" a category than gender, we should not assume that race is objective or biological either. The boundaries of "races" are fluid and regularly shifting and re-defined. Likewise, stereotypes and "popular images" of groups transform over time.

Silence on race does not presume the *absence* of race; instead, it is associated with invisibility (Persaud & Walker 2001: 374). For those authors who have reflected on the role of race in IR, there is widespread agreement that race has been accorded "the epistemological status of silence" in IR (Persaud & Walker 2001: 374). However, race does play an active role: Vitalis reflects on the "silence and evasion" regarding race and argues that IR has been infused with a "norm against noticing" (2000: 333). Krishna argues that IR is "predicated on a systematic politics of forgetting, a willful amnesia, on the question of race" (2001: 401). Race does not need to be "brought into IR"; it has been there all along. IR is "a quintessentially white discipline"; race is "the crucial epistemic silence around which the discipline is written and coheres" (Krishna 2001: 407). Krishna posits that IR's emphasis on – even fetishization of – abstraction (2001: 401-2) is complicit in this deliberate ignorance of race. While inevitable, "abstraction is never innocent of power": it determines what is included and what is excluded from

consideration, as knowledge production is a "process of concealment and unknowing" (Krishna 2001: 403), and race is a topic that has been silenced from IR.

Race is also relevant to IR because it has historically been implicated in "explicit doctrines of inequality" and exclusionary practices (Doty 1993: 452), including slavery, imperialism, genocide, and ethnic cleansing. The invented category of race has played a "taxonomical role" in global politics through "dividing up the world into various binary opposites such as civilized/uncivilized; modern/backward; rational/superstitious; [and] developed/undeveloped" (Persaud & Walker 2001: 374). The processes spurred by such binaries have included infantilization (Persaud & Walker 2001: 374) and feminization in creating international structures of power, and have played a decisive role in "the spatial and demographic configuration of the world", the global economy, and in social formations (Persaud & Walker 2001: 375). As such, just as it has been a weakness of many feminist approaches to neglect race, neither should critical approaches to race neglect the simultaneous and overlapping practices of gendering and feminization which accompanies racialization, though often in multiple and contradictory ways. Krishna draws attention to how focus on certain topics and neglect of others has important consequences for the discipline, and asks: "what is the relationship between the political unconscious of our discipline—the repressed stories of racism, genocide, violence, and theft—and the obsessions of our craft—terrorism, illegal immigration, insecurity, and secrecy?" (2001: 421). Especially considering the intimate relationship between knowledge and power, IR theorists have a moral responsibility to critically evaluate the silences we (re)produce and the consequences of our blindness to certain topics on both the discipline and the "real world" of international politics.

Theorizing race can address some of the silences that IR has long perpetuated. Race can give "a visible dimension to hierarchy in white dominance systems in which white groups control the reward system and exercise discrimination" (Doty 1993: 447). Colour-blindness does not alter or correct the racial pivots of allocations of power and privilege. In fact, CRT notes that colour-blindness in the legal sense was invoked in arguments to *maintain* segregation in the United States, and by the late 1960s arguments for colour-blindness were largely rejected by individuals and groups fighting for racial progress in American laws and society (Haney Lopez 2007: 1004). Indeed, Haney Lopez affirms that constitutional colour-blindness (2007: 1046) is "exactly backwards" and disastrous, as it is a major impediment to addressing and dismantling racial hierarchy (2007: 1061). It is more difficult to confront inequalities that are invisible than those that are obvious. Consider Anthony Marx's (1996) comparison of resistance to racial discrimination in the United States, South Africa, and Brazil: despite similar discrimination and disparities of quality of life and life chances, the organization of resistance movements in the United States and South Africa was more ably stimulated by the official nature of discriminatory policies—Segregation and Apartheid. These were better able to serve as rallying points for resistance than in Brazil, as Brazilian rhetoric on "racial democracy" and the absence of legal distinctions explicitly based on race deprived Brazilians of such a target (Marx 1996). Furthermore, Bell notes, the "absence of visible signs of discrimination creates an atmosphere of racial neutrality and encourages whites to believe that racism is a thing of the past" (Bell 1992: 6). This does not, of course, presume that race is the only factor acting in power relations—attention to discrimination and variation in social and political status and opportunities also varies widely according to gender and class, and hierarchies exist *within* racialized groups as well as between them.

Vitalis points to White supremacy as a particularly powerful norm that has had far-reaching effects both within the United States and internationally; it was widely exported in the early twentieth century (2000: 337). Jim Crow systems were implemented "to order social relations in American colonies and dependencies", such as in the Panama Canal Zone in the early twentieth century and an oil enclave in Saudi Arabia in the 1940s (Vitalis 2000: 337). As a taken-for-granted norm, White supremacy "constitutes the identities and regulates the behavior of states and people" (Vitalis 2000: 337). Vitalis dismisses the argument that "humanitarian norms" or norms of "racial equality" may be more important than that of White supremacy (2000: 337), concluding that "[h]umanitarian action historically always involved intervention by white Western states and directed at places *not* identified as white and Western. It is a logic appropriate *only* to those not sufficiently 'like us'" (2000: 339; original emphasis). As such, differences have played a more powerful role than the sameness of shared humanity. Todorov has similarly argued: "To attribute colonial expansion ... to the humanist project of exporting the Enlightenment is to take at face value what was only propaganda; ... The reasons for the colonial conquest were political and economic, rather than humanitarian" (cited in Grovogui 2001: 429). As such, discounting race as a powerful force of colonialism merely silences racism but does not remove racial prejudice from history and institutions that endure today.

In sum, we must be critical of the very concept of race, in addition to its material effects, because the "failure to interrogate race itself in the process of studying it is dangerous because it narrows the possibilities of the ways in which we can imagine that race 'works'" (Doty 1993: 457). As Gruffydd Jones points out, the absence of theorizing race in IR is conspicuous due to the known fact that most of the world's poor are not White (2008: 908), and yet the experiences of "White" Europe and North America are generalized in theorizations about the "nature" of the

international system, neglecting the social and historical processes involved in the construction of the so-called Westphalian international sovereign states system. Silence on race is not equivalent to racial equality in practice; thus, we must turn to race in order to challenge the "starkly racialised structure of global inequality" (Gruffydd Jones 2008: 908). Not only does racial "colour-blindness" affect what we can see and address in the interactions that occur in global politics, the lack of critical engagement with the concept itself produces blind spots in IR. In fact, the "liberal notion of 'colour-blind' social institutions" is part and parcel of the "racial oppression [which] is routinely and structurally reproduced by apparently neutral, non-racial institutions" (Gruffydd Jones 2008: 918).

Recalling that IR has silenced but not overcome race, the assumption that ideology is a thing of the past "elides the racialized, gendered, and class processes that underwrite global hierarchies" and intensifies "the peripheralization of the South along economic, political, social, and cultural lines" (Chowdhry & Nair 2002: 1). Chowdhry and Nair argue for the need to address "the imbrication of race, class, and gender with power" (2002: 2), which CRT calls intersectionality, in order to ask questions that have thus far been impossible to ask in a "colour-blind" IR. While traditional IR places the assumption of anarchy at the centre of understanding international relations, "it is hierarchy, not anarchy, and a Eurocentric understanding of rationality that is privileged and reproduced in ... renderings of power in IR" (Chowdry & Nair 2002: 4). In addition to structuring international politics, racializations rooted in colonial or imperial experiences are also enacted domestically, including the ongoing dispossession of indigenous populations, or in the so-called "War on Terror", as the racialized "enemy within" is targeted as well as the "foreign" enemy. If we are to resist these structures of power, we must critically examine, rather than ignore, the roles played by race, gender, and class. Foregrounding

race can help us to address issues such as "North-South hierarchies, postcolonial and national identities, and immigration and security discourses" (Chowdhry & Nair 2002: 18; Persaud 2002) that are involved in unequal power relations and injustices in global politics.

Many postcolonial and poststructural authors highlight the power of representation (e.g. Chowdhry & Nair 2002: 15; Weldes 2003). Indeed, a number of scholars have stressed the "relationship between Western representation and knowledge on the one hand, and Western material and political power on the other" (Moore-Gilbert, cited in Chowdhry & Nair 2002: 15), and that these are "underwritten by constructions of race, class, and gender" (Chowdhry & Nair 2002: 15). Racialized and gendered representations of the "other" are modes of power relations that are enacted in global politics, including in the "War on Terror". Discourse and representations of "the global Islamic resurgence" relies on dichotomies: secular/fundamentalist, modern/backward, progress/stagnation, and reason/irrationality (Chowdhry & Nair 2002: 16). Paying attention to race and taking a postcolonial approach creates opportunities for resistance to "dominant discourses of representation and power by framing its own 'counter-narrative'" (Chowdhry & Nair 2002: 26). Thus, a relevant approach to studying race in international politics is through IR's aesthetic turn – discussed above – to look at how dichotomies are expressed and how groups are racialized in popular culture, especially in cinema and television.

Through its embedded assumptions of Western/Eurocentrism and White supremacy, IR's silence on race has served to reinforce dominant narratives that are complicit in maintaining a status quo that privileges the West in structures of power that are gendered and racialized. In addition to taking account of the material and structural effects of race on international politics, we must critically consider race and racial categories as socially constructed and historically contingent. If we are mindful that theory is always "for someone and for some purpose" (Cox

1981: 128), we should not take racial categories as natural, but rather as serving some purpose. Thus, we must critically evaluate the roles of racist stereotypes. In order to better account for the disciplining power of race in IR and in global politics, IR's aesthetic turn has much to gain from engaging with the insights of Critical Race Theory. Foregrounding race as a theoretical concept can be a tool of resistance, as it allows us to question existing narratives and deconstruct distributions of power, denaturalizing the assumptions and configurations that have long been taken for granted. In particular, deconstructing the racialization of Muslims in the "War on Terror" is a crucial element in exposing and resisting the discourse that makes the "War on Terror" possible, along with the many violences it perpetuates.

Critical Race Theory and Racialization

> Research in psychosocial and psycholinguistic analysis of racism suggests a related effect of racist hate propaganda: at some level, no matter how much both victims and well-meaning dominant-group members resist it, racial inferiority is planted in our minds as an idea that may hold some truth. The idea is improbable and abhorrent, but it is there before us, because it is presented repeatedly. 'Those people' are lazy, dirty, sexualized, money-grubbing, dishonest, inscrutable, we are told. We reject the idea, but the next time we sit next to one of 'those people' the dirt message, the sex message, is triggered. We stifle it, reject it as wrong, but it is there, interfering with our perception and interaction with the person next to us.   Mari J. Matsuda, 1989: 2339-40

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been the field of insightful discussion on practices of racialization and discrimination, and challenging White supremacy and racial hierarchies since the late 1980s, pioneered by scholars such as Derrick Bell, Patricia Williams, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda, and Richard Delgado, to name only a few. The above citation

illustrates what is at stake in taking race seriously: racism and racist stereotypes are embedded in society and they are not benign, but central to the creation and preservation of inequalities of all kinds, as well as constitutive of the identities of subjects. They are thus of great importance for understanding the worldviews and behaviours of actors. Pop culture is an important site in which racist stereotypes are circulated and reinforced.

One of the most important things to note about CRT is its emphasis on the mundane, ordinary nature of racism and racial discrimination. Racism is often treated as an aberration that does not reflect the mainstream of a society, but is in fact embedded throughout society and is regularly experienced in the daily lives of people of colour (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 16-22). The manifestations of racism do not only include blatant forms of violence and exclusion, but also microaggressions:

> small acts of racism, consciously or unconsciously perpetrated, welling up from the assumptions about racial matters most of us absorb from the cultural heritage in which we come of age in the [US]. These assumptions, in turn, continue to inform our public civic institutions–government, schools, churches–and our private, personal, and corporate lives. (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 16)

Ignoring racism is profoundly unhelpful in any quest for social justice as "[colourblind], or 'formal,' conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment that is the same across the board, can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination" (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 19).

While some emphasize progress towards greater racial equality over time, we must remember just how recently segregation, anti-miscegenation laws, and other forms of blatant racial discrimination have been and continue to be practised, and that racial equality has never

materialized. Even today, "the racism that made slavery feasible is far from dead" and gains made by the civil rights movement are often eroded (Bell 1992: 3). Bell argues that "[w]hat we designate as 'racial progress' is not a solution ... It is a regeneration of the problem in a particularly perverse form", illustrated in statistics on unemployment, income levels, and poverty (Bell 1992: 3). Yet, these statistics cannot even begin to capture the societal consequences of racism, such as "broken homes, anarchy in communities, futility in the public schools", as well as "[d]rug-related crime, teenaged parenthood, and disrupted and disrupting family life"; these are "manifestations of a despair that feeds on self", eroding self-worth and replacing it with self-rejection (Bell 1992: 4). Furthermore, "the general use of so-called neutral standards to continue exclusionary practices reduces the effectiveness of traditional civil rights laws, while rendering discriminatory actions more oppressive than ever" (Bell 1992: 6).

In a foundational article, Bell controversially challenged the assumption of the good of pursuing integration of school boards for the sake of desegregation itself, as mandated in 1954 by the Supreme Court decision on Brown v. Board of Education (1976). He argued that a single-minded commitment to racial balance is the pursuit of an inaccessible goal and is not the best approach to reforming the educational system (1976: 516). Bell argued that civil rights lawyers were not serving the interests of their clients by blindly pursuing desegregation and that they should focus instead on ensuring a high quality education for Black children, even if this took place in "Black" schools (1976). Ultimately, the integration effort was harmed by a lack of imagination of alternative ways that "equal educational opportunity" might be pursued (Bell 1976: 488). Additionally, prior to the Brown decision, racial bias was explicit and "unalloyed with hypocrisy and blank-faced lies", while the subsequent era of official integration features the masking of bias in "unofficial practices and 'neutral' standards" (Bell 1992: 6). Today, racial

profiling of Arabs and Muslims in the United States is more overt and formally legalized than in other places like Canada, where it is more informal (Razack 2008: 32), but this should not lead us to believe that the most visible cases of racialized legal structures are the only or even the majority of instances of institutionalized racism.

CRT is pessimistic about prospects for racial justice and the very possibility of overcoming racism. Derrick Bell, the "intellectual father figure" of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 18), follows Fanon in the belief that racism is "permanently embedded in the psychology, economy, society, and culture of the modern world" (Bell 1992: x). Despite the impossibility of racial justice and equality, Fanon "urged people of color to resist psychologically the inheritance they had come into" (Bell 1992: x). Likewise, Bell urges constant resistance and defiance as a goal in itself, even if the eradication of racism is an impossible endpoint (1992: xii). The assumption that racism is an aberration that will be overcome by time and progress is comforting and implies that no massive action must be taken to solve the problems of racism. As such, it is crucial to move beyond this disabling assumption (Bell 1992: 13).

CRT is associated with Critical Legal Studies, which is known for rejecting many prominent legal definitions, such as the "categorial" jurisprudence approach which fails to recognize the contextual and social nature of identities (Kropp 1998). The critical legal literature provides multiple (but related) definitions of race or racism. For example, Lawrence defines racism as a largely unconscious "set of beliefs whereby we irrationally attach significance to something called race", explaining the irrationality of racism in the sense that the meanings assigned to race are not fully conscious, and that racism is dysfunctional as it is an obstacle to using human resources and managing social relations effectively (1987: 330). Other authors speak of racism in structural and ideological terms, speaking of the "ideology of racial

supremacy and the mechanisms for keeping selected victim groups in subordinated positions" (Matsuda 1989: 2332), or a "socially and legally produced hierarchical system structurally embedded in U.S. society" (Haney Lopez 2007: 990). Recalling Cox's argument that theory is for someone and some purpose (1981: 128), through "interest convergence", racist systems and hierarchies serve the interests of the dominant or privileged group, both psychologically and materially (Bell 1980; Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 19-20).

Another CRT assumption is the "voice-of-color thesis" which presumes that "because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that the whites are unlikely to know", though the assumption that being a person of colour automatically implies a competence to speak on matters of race and racism has also been criticized (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 21). However, as Bell notes, it is harder for those who benefit from White privilege to imagine how the world could be different because racial others play a stabilizing role, especially in appeasing less privileged Whites with the knowledge that they are still higher in the social order – Bell's metaphorical "well" – than people of colour (1992: 8-9).

Racialization of Muslims post-9/11

Much like how the discursive feminisation – whether instrumental or incidental – of certain individuals, groups, and professions devalues and frequently exploits these groups, men being included among affected individuals, groups may be racialized in practices of "othering" to serve various political ends. While practices of racialization occur everywhere, the racialization of Muslims in the "War on Terror" is a salient example. It would be wrong to imply that the United States and its allies have the market cornered on "othering" Muslims: Muslims have also

been racialized in other contexts, including in Hindu nationalist discourse which appeals to the "Global Threat of Islam" (Biswas 2001: 504).

Although some argue that "racialization" should not be applied to a religious group, this is the relevant feature of the racialization of the "enemy" in the "War on Terror" as it includes Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds, rather than more traditional "racial" or "national" markers. As Biswas suggests, one can argue that "the prejudices of Western secularism make religion a new kind of racio-cultural marker – whether it be in marking out the bodies of an immigrant underclass of color in the New Europe or in marking out the contemporary face of underdevelopment" (2002: 199; see also 2001: 503). In the case of the "War on Terror", the threatening group involves individuals from a diversity of backgrounds, including the "enemy within" of naturalized immigrants and White converts as part of a "racist global discourse on Islam and Muslims" (Biswas 2001: 508). Physical characteristics are less relevant in racializations in the "War on Terror" as, for example, a South Asian person will be read differently if he is seen as Hindu or if he is seen as Muslim; I say "he" because the construction of the threatening other in the rhetoric on the "War on Terror" is also highly gendered.

While male garb seen to imply Muslim-ness (often erroneously including the Sikh turban) is associated with threat, female "Muslim" garb is more commonly associated with oppression and a need for liberation. Among other issues, one is less likely to assume that a Sikh man wearing a turban lacks agency and was forced to wear it, whereas women are often presumed to be forced into veiling. Although both male and female Muslim figures are racialized and therefore dehumanized – as assumptions are made about them according to reified stereotypes (Bird 1999) – they tend to occupy different positions in the context of the "War on Terror", although these categories are fluid and the racialization and gendering of the "Muslim"

other carries various, even contradictory, connotations. It should be noted that readings of Muslim women are becoming more varied, due to the actions of female suicide bombers (Narozhna & Knight 2016); involvement of women in ISIS, including the high-profile mass shooting in San Bernardino, California in December 2015 (Tucker 2015); and as evidenced in discourses on the *niqab*, according to which Muslim women are seen as oppressed and/or connected to Islamic extremism (e.g. Chambers and Roth 2014). Most of the (fictional) female terrorists studied in this research do not wear a *niqab* or even a *hijab* – perhaps highlighting the greater fear of "their" ability to hide among "us" – with the exception of female members of the ISIS/Daesh stand-in, *Tyrant*'s "Caliphate", including Samira, Jane, and Jill (see chapter seven).

The racialized image of particular bodies conforming to imagined appearances is powerful, but the more geographically and physically inclusive category of "Muslim" allows different kinds of bodies, including female and/or White bodies, to be racialized similarly to the "Brown" or visibly non-Western bodies of the popular imaginary of this "enemy". For example, the "terrorists" of *Sleeper Cell* include Arabs, a Bosnian Muslim, and Caucasian American and French converts to Islam. As Doty notes, racialization, like identity, is "simultaneously a *practice* and an *effect* that is always in the process of being 'written' or constructed" (1993: 453; original emphasis), and so the relevant criteria can easily shift. As Kundnani succinctly reminds us: "since all racisms are socially and politically constructed rather than reliant on the reality of any biological race, it is perfectly possible for cultural markers associated with Muslimness (forms of dress, rituals, languages, etc.) to be turned into racial signifiers" (2014: 11). Naber argues that Islam has been a "racial category" since the late 1990s (Zaatari 2011: 67). Morey and Yaqin take this idea even further to argue that "behavior, the body, and dress are treated not as cultural markers but as a kind of moral index, confirming non-Muslim viewers of these

images in their sense of superiority and cementing the threatening strangeness of the Muslim Other" (2011: 3).

Racial profiling plays an important role in the "War on Terror" in both its "real-life" and mediatized forms; race is taken as "a proxy for risk", with important markers of suspicion including "brown skin, 'Middle Eastern looks,' beards, and Muslim or Arab names" (Razack 2008: 32, referencing the work of Reem Badhi). As such, the logic of the "War on Terror" presumes that, even if most Arabs and Muslims are not terrorists, it is rational to use racial profiling to find potential suspects because "their culture remains a source of suspicion for its radicalizing effects" (Kundnani 2014: 267). In addition to many examples we could find in news media and elsewhere, television dramas such as *Homeland* and *24* reinforce this logic about racial profiling. Even if it is regrettable, racial profiling appears necessary within a dichotomy opposing safety and freedom (Alsultany 2012: 47). Thus, while "Muslim-ness" is the most important factor in constructing the enemies of the "War on Terror", and can include individuals of any background, an "Arab" or "Middle Eastern" aesthetic still dominates popular perceptions of Muslims, both writ large and of "terrorists" in particular. Indeed, of the Muslim characters studied in this project, 70% are Muslim men of "Middle Eastern" provenance, and "Middle Eastern" men and women together account for 90% of Muslims featured in these programs. By contrast, Muslims from the Middle East (over 300,000) account for closer to 20% of the global Muslim population of 1.5 billion.

Practices of racialization also operate in intersecting ways. Converts to Islam who are people of colour are racialized differently than their Caucasian counterparts; conversion to Islam can be seen as an unsurprising progression in a life of crime or moral decrepitude, whereas for White subjects it may be perceived as a surprising abandonment of civilization (Alsultany 2012:

122). Alsultany contrasts the coverage of two real-life cases of Americans who engaged in terrorism: the first is that of John Walker Lindh, a White man portrayed as having been a "sweet, unassuming boy" until he converted to Islam, studied in the Middle East, and eventually went to Pakistan to join Al-Qaeda; his transformation is cast as a puzzle as to why he would abandon "civilization", which can only be explained by his "going Muslim" (2012: 109). The other is that of Jose Padilla, a Latino man who is portrayed as a juvenile delinquent who was involved with gangs and theft, and that from this "life of crime" the transition to terrorism is not surprising, but "part of a larger trend of men of color who fill prisons, convert to Islam in prison", and upon being released commit more crimes and end up back in prison (2012: 122). This contrast is also paralleled in television portrayals, such as in *Sleeper Cell*, in which the Latino character Benito describes his conversion as elevating him from the status of a mere "gangbanger". Tommy, meanwhile, is blonde-haired and blue-eyed and comes from an upper-middle class family with a well-meaning liberal mother; his conversion is largely attributed to an immature act of rebellion against his parents. It is also interesting to note a parallel between the real-life case of Lindh and Tommy on *Homeland*, regarding the intersection of gender and sexual orientation: Lindh's lack of interest in girls is often pointed to as a sign of deviance that helps to explain his conversion to Islam, discussion of which often focuses on his sexuality (Alsultany 2012: 112). Lindh's mother is described as a "hippy", while his father came out as homosexual after his parents separated, and it is said that his parents had "liberal interests gone unchecked" that led to Lindh's trajectory (Alsultany 2012: 112). Tommy, meanwhile, blames his mother's feminist and liberal ideas for ostensibly driving away his father (*Sleeper Cell,* S01E06) and explicitly blames parental failure in the "martyr" video that he records before he dies committing a terrorist attack (S01E09).

Homeland portrays the conversion of White, middle class individuals as unexpected and puzzling. In the case of Aileen Morgan: "somehow she made the journey from Connecticut schoolgirl to terrorist girlfriend, involved in a plot against America. How? Why?" (S01E06). Gender also plays an important role in the characterization of Aileen, as the fact that she is a woman makes her association with terrorism all the more shocking. However, the racializing power of culture is active here, as the primary biographical detail that is uncovered to explain her transformation is the fact that she spent time in Saudi Arabia as a girl (S01E06). Furthermore, even if their conversion marks their exit from "civilization" and essential racialization on the basis of their Muslim-ness, White "subjects are granted a more thorough explanation than" people of colour (Alsultany 2012: 126). For example, the in-depth characterization of *Homeland*'s Brody greatly exceeds the exploration of a Muslim terrorist on this show or any other (see chapter four). *Sleeper Cell*'s Darwyn Al-Sayeed is a rare example of a heroic protagonist who is both a Muslim and a man of colour (see chapter five).

Nevertheless, in the "War on Terror" it is Muslim-ness that *explains* and gives coherence to terrorism and other negative characterizations of Muslims such as misogyny because race "provides the most accessible meaning to events" (Razack 2008: 50-1): "We do not need proof when we have a racial configuration of signs" (Razack 2008: 51). Because Muslim-ness is defined by "the irrationality and unpredictability of *their* natures and cultures" (Razack 2008: 31; emphasis added), implying that Islam is an ideology for which there is no cure (Razack 2008: 43, 47), Muslim-ness is the main explanation required for framing terrorism. Alsultany argues that this perception is reinforced by television dramas as, often, no motivation for Arab and/or Muslim terrorists is provided; thus, no rationale beyond Arab-ness or Muslim-ness is needed, or it would be incomprehensible to an American audience (2012: 3).

Kundnani notes that the "political act of labeling certain forms of violence as terrorism is also usually a racialized act" (2014: 22) which is mostly applied to "acts of political violence carried out by Muslims" (2014: 23). Framing is extremely important as it participates in agenda-setting (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 63) and in (re)producing public opinion, which is not an external phenomenon, but something which must "be brought into existence" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 64). While such perceptions are discernible in policy and news media, they are also narrated through pop culture; a key example is the case of Brody on *Homeland*, in which the revelation of his Muslim-ness is tantamount to confirming his association with terrorism (see chapter four). Razack notes that reductionist perceptions of Muslims and the emphasis on irrationality also functions to exclude Muslims from law and politics in the West, further entrenching them in a logic of exception, because of the "position that all Muslims and Arabs live outside of reason, and should therefore be cast outside of the law" (2008: 58). This is also related to the culturalization of racism, according to which "dominant groups often perceive subordinate groups as possessing *cultures* that are inferior and overly patriarchal"; since 9/11, much American discussion about "culture" has been focused on Muslims (Razack 2008: 173; original emphasis). Cultural or racialized stereotypes are not aberrant, but exist in all levels of society, including in the military and "on the ground" in the "War on Terror", influencing military practices at home and abroad (Der Derian 2009/2001: 286). Kundnani agrees that through the assumption that "Islamist" ideology is the root cause of terrorism, "Muslim culture" has taken centre stage in the "War on Terror" (2014: 10), and that Islamophobia is a "form of structural racism directed at Muslims" which is sustained through a "symbiotic relationship with the official thinking and practices of the war on terror" (2014: 11). Muslims are cast as troublesome "unenlightened outsiders" with values at odds with the "West" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 1).

Alsultany argues that the universal portrayal of Muslims as "fanatical, misogynistic, [and] anti-American … serves a larger narrative about an evil Other that can be powerfully and easily mobilized during times of war", and is thus strategically useful in the "War on Terror" (2012: 9). Razack (2008) and Kundani (2014) agree that a crucial dynamic of the culturalization of racism vis-à-vis Muslims is the creation of a dichotomy according to which Islamic culture is fundamentally at odds with modernity. The racialization of Muslims exists throughout the "West", including in Britain, where the media project perceptions of Muslims as a "problem group" that is unable to integrate into British society (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 64). Despite other possible approaches, the cultural or civilizational lens is the one that is privileged (Alsultany 2012: 103). There are also geographical elements to this imaginary: the Middle East is portrayed "as a place that breeds terrorism" (Alsultany 2012: 9).

Pop culture can help us to understand the dynamics and negative effects of racism. If, as Lawrence (1987) has argued, racism is partially unconscious, but the meanings we assign to race affect social relations, we must first reveal the assumptions and meanings underlying racializations and racial discrimination before we can hope to counter them. If we follow Lawrence in assuming that "tacitly transmitted stereotypes" inform largely unconscious racism (1987: 343), we should pay attention to racial stereotypes. As Matsuda notes, implements of racism are not only those involving physical violence, but there is also the "violence of the word" (1989: 2332). She highlights that "racist hate messages, threats, slurs, epithets, and disparagement" (1989: 2332) – and to this list we can add stereotypes in pop culture – all physically, physiologically, and psychologically affect members of the targeted group, and reinforce patterns of domination (1989: 2335-7). Indeed, Matsuda argues that the "spoken message of hatred and inferiority is conveyed on the street, in schoolyards, *in popular culture*

and in the propaganda of hate widely distributed" in the United States (1989: 2332, emphasis added) – as elsewhere. Furthermore, limiting what counts as racism or hate speech to more limited legal definitions such as incitement to violence is inadequate, as explicit discrimination fails to take account of implicit bias or racism, which is "pervasive but diffuse, consequential but unintended, ubiquitous but invisible" (Kang & Banaji 2006: 1080). Hate speech includes "insulting nouns for racial groups", "degrading caricatures", and other forms of dehumanization (Matsuda 1989: 2333) – as such, we can consider racist stereotypes in popular culture a form of hate speech, and therefore worthy of analytical attention. Racist stereotypes in pop culture are important, as "the mental constructs that guide our evaluations include beliefs (stereotypes) and feelings (prejudice) about entire social categories" (Kang & Banaji 2006: 1083). We would be neglecting an important aspect of society if we did not consider the impact of popular culture in playing a role in informing individual and collective assumptions about social groups. For many individuals and in many communities, media, television, cinema, video games, and other forms of pop culture may be the only sources of knowledge of some groups. This may often be the case, especially with the de facto racial segregation of many communities in the United States.

Even those individuals that do have personal experiences or *positive* attitudes towards the group in question to counteract the barrage of stereotypical representations in pop culture (Kang & Banaji 2006: 1105) are not immune to these "ubiquitous and chronically accessible" categorizations (Kang & Banaji 2006: 1084). Through "racial mechanics"

> an individual (target) is mapped into a social category in accordance with prevailing legal and cultural mapping rules. Once mapped, the category activates various meanings, which include cognitive and affective associations that may be partly hard-wired but are mostly culturally-conditioned. (Kang & Banaji 2006: 1085)

Members of targeted groups are also affected by the broader context of White supremacy. As Fanon argued: "we read white books [and to this we could add other forms of popular culture, such as television programs] and we gradually assimilate the prejudices, the myths and the folklore that come from Europe" (1952/2008: 168). Likewise, bell hooks argues that "[s]ystems of domination, imperialism, colonialism, and racism actively coerce black folks to internalize negative perceptions of blackness, to be self-hating" (1995: 32); one of the ways this is enabled is through the projecting of White supremacist values into the home and other intimate spaces by mass media (1995: 110, 116). In the case of Muslims in American media, representations are mainly negative; as Raja quips on *Aliens in America*: "Actually, I enjoy seeing people such as myself on television, even if we are portrayed as one dimensional supervillains" (S01E14). However, even avoiding racist stereotypes can still reinforce institutionalized racism by failing to challenge them, if it projects a world in which racism no longer exists (hooks 1995: 111-13). hooks is critical of portrayals of a world of liberal White folks who are happily social equals and respect the authority of Black folks, arguing that portrayals such as the plethora of Black judges in popular culture, or buddy cop movies such as *Lethal Weapon*, give an inaccurate picture of racial harmony, while they often, nevertheless, reinscribe the centrality of Whiteness (1995: 111-15). Media and popular culture are not innocent in the maintenance of systemic racism and structures of White supremacy; hooks argues that "many more white Americans would be anti-racist if they were not socialized daily to embrace racist assumptions" (1995: 118). As such, challenging mass media is a crucial site at which to fight for racial justice.

It is also important to keep in mind that racism extends beyond discrimination and prejudices by some groups against others. Indeed, seeing racism only as discrimination can serve to obscure its effect "as a political tool of colonialism and imperialism" (hooks 1981: 119),

which operates through both intentional policy-level efforts and unconscious internalized racism. While prejudice is an aspect of racism, it should not be reduced to feelings of prejudice between groups: "racism is oppressive not because white folks have prejudicial feelings about blacks (they could have such feelings and leave [black folks] alone) but because it is a system that promotes domination and subjugation" (hooks 1995: 154). Thus, prejudicial feelings Black individuals or groups may have towards White people are of a different order, as they are not part of systems of oppression and maintaining unequal power structures (hooks 1995: 154-5). Furthermore, when racism is institutionalized or bureaucratized, "[r]acial distinctions become so routinized that a racial hierarchy is maintained without requiring the component of individual actors who are personally hostile towards Muslims" – or other targeted groups (Razack 2008: 9). As such, the most banal racism can be most difficult to perceive and thus challenge, especially if it is not accompanied by more readily identifiable hate speech or overt discrimination.

Performativity

This research is concerned with performativity, or "how identities continue to be produced, embodied and performed, effectively, passionately and with social and political consequence" (Bell 1999: 2). While more of the performativity literature focuses on gender, arguing that gender is not inherent or natural, but rather is "an effect performatively produced" (Bell 1999: 3), insights from performativity are equally relevant to practices of racialization. Like gender, race is a social construct and not a natural phenomenon (Doty 1993); as such, we can argue that race may be constructed, or brought into existence, through performance. As Gilroy's work has noted, race is not static or monolithic, but rather is historically constituted, and so racism is dynamic, varying in form over space and time (Bell 1999: 21). Performance does not reflect a given identity; instead, "identity is the effect of performance" (Bell 1999: 3). In other

words, "identities are constructed by the 'very "expressions" that are said to be [their] results'" (Fortier 1999: 43, citing Butler).

Language is powerful and endowed with a certain agency as it can "injure" and *act* against us (Butler 1997: 1), such as in the case of racist speech, which may be qualified as "words that wound", as in CRT (Butler 1997: 4) or through "the violence of representation", as argued by Toni Morrison (Butler 1997: 6). Furthermore, language, e.g. through name-calling, *constitutes* subjects, recalling Althusser's concept of "interpellation"; this name-calling creates the very possibility of social existence for a subject (Butler 1997: 2), as existence is predicated on being recognized and being recognizable (Butler 1997: 5). Referring to Butler's theory about the "citationality" of performativity, acts "derive their binding power" "through the invocation of convention" (Fortier 1999: 43; Butler 1997: 5). Likewise, Alsultany notes that dominant meanings are (re)produced through their convergence at a variety of sites and in multiple cultural products (2012: 134). As such, stereotypes that circulate in popular culture are powerful modes of "performances" of what is constructed as "Muslim-ness", particularly through these processes of name-calling (e.g. "terrorist") and through processes of citationality or invocation of convention, particularly those tropes that are most commonly performed (e.g. the ubiquity of the trope of the Muslim terrorist). However, while derogatory language may seem to fix subjects and construct them according to a static identity, it also produces an opening for resistance as the interpellated subject may, in turn, use language to counter the initial name-calling (Butler 1997: 2). According to a politics of visuality, as performativity is not only textual, but also visual, *racialization* is a modality of performativity, "the performativity of what it is 'to *race* something' or to be 'raced' by it" (Butler in Bell 1999: 6; original emphasis).

Goldberg's definition of racialization is helpful in conceptualizing the role of pop culture in reinforcing and perpetuating racism and structures of domination. According to Goldberg, racialization refers to "any and all significance extended, both explicitly and silently by racial reference, over discursive expression and practice" (cited in Razack 1995: 46). Further, for Goldberg, "racist" refers to "exclusions prompted or promoted by racial reference or racialized significance, whether such exclusions are actual or intended, effects or affects of racial and racialized expression" (cited in Razack 1995: 46). Where "race thinking" is concerned, emphasis on "values" does not imply the absence of race thinking, but rather "conceals the hierarchy it expresses" (Razack 2008: 8). Pop culture is an important site of racism and practices of racialization because, as per Goldberg's definition, it both explicitly and silently, to varying degrees of subliminal implication, assigns significance and meanings to the moral character of a particular group. Through the medium of cinema or television, attitudes about members of a subordinated group do not need to be explicit (though they *can* be explicitly stated), but can also be more subtly implied through the speech, actions, and general attributes of characters depicting members of the group in question. While films and television programs can explicitly address themes of race and racial tensions, Omi and Winant, writing in a legal context, argue that it is "possible to perpetuate racial domination without making any explicit reference to race at all" (cited in Razack 1995: 47). Thus, without obviously making commentaries on the characteristics of members of racialized groups, structures of domination are continuously reproduced in pop culture, from the very presence or lack thereof of members of subordinated groups, and in writing and casting decisions of the characters involved regarding who will be the figure of the hero, the villain, the criminal, the business professional, the intellectual, and so on.

In sum, recalling that "race" is not given, but is socially and historically constructed, like gender, and serves particular political interests that have stakes in the status quo, racialization refers to the insistence on certain characteristic(s) as the relevant feature(s) that are definitive of the essence of a group of people, whose boundaries are also drawn in the act of racialization. Thus, the racialization of Muslims implies that "Muslim-ness" is taken as the defining characteristic of those deemed to belong to this group.

How does pop culture racialize Muslims through *performing* "Muslim-ness" in particular ways? Derogatory speech has both an illocutionary function, which proceeds through conventions and *constitutes* its addressee when it is uttered, as well as a perlocutionary function, which proceeds through consequences and *acts upon* its listener, through which it does not merely reflect social relations, but "reinvokes and reinscribes a structural relation of domination" (Butler 1997: 18). Hate speech "constitute[s] the subject in a subordinate position" (Butler 1997: 18). Furthermore, "racist epithets not only relay a message of racial inferiority, but that 'relaying' is the verbal institutionalization of that very subordination" (Butler 1997: 72). As such, the (re)enactment of racist stereotypes of Muslims not only reflects societal perceptions, but it performs Muslim-ness in a way that reinforces and recreates it in a subordinate, inferior, or threatening position. The very frequency and reiteration of racialized stereotypes remind us of the importance Butler attaches to ritual: it does not stem from beliefs, but rather "produces the belief that appears to be 'behind' it" (1997: 25). Similarly to how performance creates identity, and not vice-versa, Althusser argues that ideas "do not *precede* such actions, but have their 'existence . . . inscribed in the actions of practices governed by rituals . . .'" (Butler 1997: 25, citing Althusser). Recalling the importance of convention and recognizability, the speaker is not the sole author of his or her speech; the speaker is responsible for "negotiating the legacies of

usage that constrain and enable that speaker's speech" (Butler 1997: 27). As Butler notes: "Racist speech works through the invocation of convention; it circulates, and though it requires the subject for its speaking, it neither begins nor ends with the subject who speaks or with the specific name that is used" (1997: 34). However, appeals to convention or preexisting stereotypes give the speech resonance and recognizability. As such, racism cannot be reduced to a particular speaker and audience, as this would reduce the "elaborate institutional structures of racism" to the particular "scene of utterance" (Butler 1997: 79-80).

A particular power of speech is the power of *naming*, which is important to consider when evaluating how stereotypes are performed in pop culture (Butler 1997: 29). As Butler notes, "all sorts of historically and potentially injurious words are recirculated in rap, in film, even as calligrammatic emblems in photography and painting" (1997: 99). The power of naming is derivative, as it could not succeed "if its formulation did not repeat a 'coded' or iterable utterance" (Austin, cited in Butler 1997: 51). As such, when a performative succeeds, it is because it "echoes prior actions, and *accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior and authoritative set of practices ...* the act is itself a ritualized practice" (Butler 1997: 51; original emphasis). Thus, uttering a racial slur is really citing that slur, and "making linguistic community with a history of speakers" (Butler 1997: 52).

Different names may pose contradictions with each other, and a summary of attributed names may pose a key challenge for identity; Najla Said's autobiography is one example of how individuals and groups can suffer identity crises related to the contradictions in how different identity markers are narrated in the media and popular culture (2013).[7] Conventions or rituals

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[7] Najla Said (2013) describes identity confusion on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, skin colour, religion, and class. She discusses the tensions of growing up as the daughter of Edward Said, who was Palestinian as well as a Professor of (largely European) Comparative Literature. She also had a Lebanese mother and multiple Christian denominations in the religious background of both sides of her family, while seeing Arabs usually portrayed as

come from a social and historical construct: "injurious names have a history, one that is invoked and reconsolidated at the moment of utterance, but not explicitly told" (Butler 1997: 36). As such, names, or in our case, stereotypes in pop culture, have a *historicity*, what might be understood as the history which has become internal to a name, has come to constitute the contemporary meaning of a name: the sedimentation of its usages as they have become part of the very name, a sedimentation, a repetition that congeals, that gives the name its force" (Butler 1997: 36). It is also important to remember that speech as an act includes not only what is said, but also what is left silent (Butler 1997: 28): "The subject is called a name, but 'who' the subject is depends as much on the names that he or she is never called: the possibilities for linguistic life are both inaugurated and foreclosed through the name" (Butler 1997: 41). In studying pop culture, we can also note what names the subject is or is not called by paying attention to the archetypes that are performed, such as the terrorist, the "good Muslim", and the Muslim victim.

Butler also argues that speech acts, which are bodily acts, are never entirely conscious or volitional, as they always do or say something unintended, or said differently than what was strictly intended (1997: 10). This is what Butler means by "excitable speech", in that speech is always, to some extent, out of the speaker's control (1997: 15) and produces deliberate and "undeliberate" effects (1997: 39). Isin's distinction between "intentional" and "purposive" acts is also helpful here, as acts are *purposive* "because bodies sense the subject position they are taking up but are neither able to calculate nor predict its outcomes", but may not be *intentional* in the sense of being according to a "rational" means-end calculation (2012: 129). Furthermore, speech acts are not always successful or efficacious in action upon the addressed subject; to say that speech has *acted* and that it has *acted upon* a subject are two separate claims (Butler 1997: 16;

Muslims in the media. She describes growing up in New York and going to school with mainly White and Jewish peers and feeling strange because of her darker skin and Palestinian and Lebanese background. She also experienced tension between her identity as an American and as an Arab, both before and after 9/11.

this also draws on a long history of speech act theory, including the work of Hegel and Gadamer). Thus, the effects of performances of "Muslim-ness" in pop culture will not entirely correspond with the intentions of creators. For instance, efforts to challenge negative and reductionist stereotypes may end up reifying the very tropes that creators sought to avoid, while resistance to racializations may be found in cases and in ways that were not explicitly intended.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality, or attention to the complex interactions of race, gender, class, and/or sexual orientation, among other categories (e.g. (dis)ability, mental illness), is an important concern in CRT (e.g. Matsuda 1989: 2322; Kropp 1998; Crenshaw 1989). In particular, CRT has contributed greatly to theorizing the intersection of race and gender, for example in works on violence against women of colour (e.g. Crenshaw 1991; Razack 1995). For decades CRT scholars have lamented single-axis frameworks that focus on only gender *or* race, which is a common lacuna in both feminist theory and antiracist politics (Crenshaw 1989). For instance, the civil rights movement of the 1950s – among other eras and struggles – did not question, but rather reinforced, patriarchy (hooks 1981: 5). Single-axis approaches distort the experiences of people who are excluded from multiple forms of privilege, causing women of colour, for instance, to be "theoretically erased" (Crenshaw 1989: 139). Instead, approaches tend to focus on "the experiences of otherwise privileged members of the group", according to which the experiences of Black people are of those who are gender- and/or class-privileged, while women who are theorized are race- and/or class-privileged (Crenshaw 1989: 140). As such, Black men dominate thinking about experiences of racism, and White women dominate assumptions about sexism and patriarchy; this further marginalizes those who are at the intersection of racism and sexism (Crenshaw 1989: 140). Likewise, Spivak has also critiqued the exclusion of subaltern

women through the sexism of patriarchal Hindu nationalism (Morton 2007: 36-7). The privileging of Whiteness regarding gender and maleness regarding race tends to be implicit and not perceived, as experiences of discrimination that are considered are those of individuals and groups who "are privileged *but for* their racial or sexual characteristics" (Crenshaw 1989: 151; original emphasis). In American society, the Black/White paradigm is prominent and employed to simplify a more complex reality, but can also be involved in further marginalizing other minority groups (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 56-7).

Various racialized assumptions are also embedded in society and in the legal system. For example, rape statutes reflect racialized assumptions about chastity and are really about White women, who are presumed to be chaste, and not about Black women, who are assumed to be promiscuous and therefore find themselves beyond the protection of the legal system in issues of rape and violence (Crenshaw 1989: 157-9; Crenshaw 1991; hooks 1981; Davis 1981). There is also an important debate in Canada surrounding victim-blaming regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women.

> The exclusion of women of colour
>
> is reinforced when *white* women speak for and as *women*. The authoritative universal voice—usually white male subjectivity masquerading as non-racial, non-gendered objectivity—is merely transferred to those who, but for gender, share many of the same cultural, economic and social characteristics. (Crenshaw 1989: 154; original emphasis)

Like mainstream approaches, feminist theory has tended to overlook race and remain *White,* reminding us of postcolonial concerns about "white women saving brown women from brown men": "Feminists thus ignore how their own race functions to mitigate some aspects of sexism and, moreover, how it privileges them over and contributes to the domination of other women"

(Crenshaw 1989: 154). For over thirty years, authors such as Mohanty have criticized White, Western feminism for excluding and limiting the possibilities of feminists of colour, and noting that feminist scholarship is inflected by power relations (1984: 334). When feminist approaches treat "third world" women as a homogenous group, women of colour are under-served, marginalized, and inaccurately represented as a powerless and victimized group; they are treated as objects, rather than subjects (Mohanty 1984: 337-8). Thus, intersectionality deepens our understanding of discrimination and privilege. Further, it is impossible to separate questions of sex and race, and attempting to do so creates distortions and reinforces biases (hooks 1981: 12). Movements are also limited in their scope if they fail to heed intersectional considerations, as "racism among women undermines the potential radicalism of feminism" (hooks 1981: 158). This has been true for anti-Black racism movements over the years, but is also pertinent to a number of issues that have become more visible in contemporary politics and society, such as racism and White supremacy undermining rather than supporting movements seeking justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada, and highlighting discrimination against Muslim women who wear the *niqab* or the *hijab* and thus find themselves the most visible objects of anti-Muslim sentiment and harassment.

Class

Class is sometimes brought into discussions of terrorism to debate the relevance of poverty regarding the causes of terrorism (Alsultany 2012: 103). Class is also an important dynamic to consider as women of less privileged classes – and thus many women of colour – have "the least control over their bodies" (hooks 1981: 74). As Miles and Brown note, racism is not static, but interacts with other phenomena; thus, it is important that we consider the role of class when studying racism, as the two are intimately related, though not interchangeable (2003:

27). Class can also intersect with racism in various ways, such as how members of the Arab-American middle class can sometimes choose to pass as White in order to attempt to avoid the effects of racism; Kundnani argues that such efforts to hide in the mainstream are a racial performance (2014: 44). However, Kundnani notes that the option of "passing" for White has been less accessible to Muslim Americans since the end of the Cold War (2014: 46).

A particularly important intersection of race with class is related to the long-standing trope of the Arab as "offensively wealthy" (Said 1993: 36; also Shaheen 2008: 45), described by Shaheen as the "oily sheikh" (2009/2001: 27). One of the ways in which the Arab and/or Muslim other is seen as threatening Western society and civilization is by posing an *economic* threat (Shaheen 2008: xii). For many years, a recurring theme in the portrayal of Arabs has been "the rising power of the Middle East" (Semmerling 2006: 8) and "discourses of oil, wealth, and violence" (Semmerling 2006: 9). These anxieties about the oil wealth of the Middle East are linked to "American fears and feelings of impotence" and weakness, fearing an amorphous "Other", "often symbolized by the image of the oil-rich, Islamic terrorist Arab" (Semmerling 2006: 18). Shaheen notes that while the sheikh is a long-standing cinematic trope, it was after the 1973 oil crisis that the figure was revised to be not only "fabulously wealthy and slothful", but a bully who was "getting rich at the expense of red-blooded Americans" (2009/2001: 25).

An interesting example of a narrative of economic and class-based threat posed by Arabs the 1995 film *Father of the Bride II*. In this film, familial anxieties become an allegory for national anxieties, revolving around Mr. Habib – a predatory Arab businessman who wants to buy the central characters' family home, effecting a "construction of the cultural Other as a threat to the domestic space of the nation as a whole" (Shapiro 1999: 83). Mr. Habib is particularly threatening because he is cold, unsentimental, and greedy; he plans to destroy the house, and

when the family has a change of heart about selling him the home, sells it back to them at a $100,000 profit (Shapiro 1999: 84). Indeed, beyond this case study, Shaheen's extensive research shows that "contemporary films present oily, militant, ostentatious sheikhs reclining in Rolls Royces, aspiring to buy up chunks of America" (2009/2001: 27).

It is worth clarifying that most pre-9/11 studies focused on portrayals of Arabs, but Arab-ness and Muslim-ness have frequently been collapsed into the same imaginary and what can be said about one can often be said about the other (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxiii). The existence of non-Muslim Arabs is generally obscured (Wazana Tompkins 2011: 135). It is particularly since 9/11 that fears about "Arabs" have been extended to all Muslims, who are supposed to "live among us and are funded with the wealth of the oil economy; and they meticulously plan against us and wait patiently to commit the most heinous crimes" (Semmerling 2006: 23).

The Intersection of Race and Sexual Orientation – Looking Towards Queer Theory

Jasbir Puar argues that "queerness folds into racialization" (2007: xii) and, in a biopolitical optic, is interested in the "process of the management of queer life at the expense of sexually and racially perverse death in relation to the contemporary politics of securitization, Orientalism, terrorism, torture, and the articulation of Muslim, Arab, Sikh, and South Asian sexualities" (2007: xiii). It is widely perceived that "Arab and Muslim queers [are] oppressed by a homophobic culture and religion" (Naber 2011: 81). Puar argues that, in the contemporary political and historical context, "there is a very specific production of terrorist bodies against properly queer subjects" (2007: xiii). CRT is concerned with intersectionality, and while sexual orientation is formally included in examples of categories that interact with race, in practice, most work on intersectionality has been on gender and/or class.

Puar proposes "a new paradigm for the theorization of race and sexuality" (2007: xxvii). Orientalist perspectives have tended to establish mutually exclusive perspectives of Muslims and homosexuals (2007: 15), especially in the context of discourse on the homophobia and violations of human rights of queer citizens in the Arab and Muslim worlds, thus creating a "Muslim or gay binary [which] mutates from a narrative of incommensurate subject positionings into an 'Islam versus homosexuality' tug of populations war" (2007: 19). Homonationalism makes it impossible to identify as both "homosexual" and "Muslim", according to which the pursuit of homosexual rights in the West is:

> yet another marker in the distance between barbarism and civilization, one that justifies further targeting of a perversely sexualized and racialized Muslim population (pedophilic, sexually lascivious and excessive, yet perversely repressed) who refuse to properly assimilate, in contrast to the upright homosexuals engaged in sanctioned kinship norms. (Puar 2007: 20)

Not unlike gender-based justifications for the invasion of Afghanistan based on how "they" treat their women, in a classic "white men saving brown women from brown men" type of scenario, how "they" treat their queer populations is also contrasted with legislation supporting equal rights for gay people elsewhere. This further serves to establish a dichotomy between "us" (the "West") as civilized, and "them" (Muslim-majority countries) as backwards and barbaric. Puar notes:

> Gay marriage reform thus indexes the racial and civilizational disjunctures between Europeans and Muslims, while effacing the circuits of political economy (class, immigration) that underpin such oppositions. While the conflict is increasingly articulated as one between queers and Muslims, what is actually at stake is the policing of

rigid boundaries of gender difference and the kinship forms most amenable to their

maintenance. (2007: 20)

Muslims are cast as posing exceptional threats to homosexuals, as the latter have been "deliberately and specifically targeted" by Muslim fundamentalists; as such, "the parameters of this opposition correlate with those of the war on terror: civilization versus barbarism" (Puar 2007: 20). Because of an apparent dichotomy between queerness and Muslim-ness and/or Arab-ness, there are tensions within the queer community due to a sentiment critiquing a perception that queer Arab women see themselves as "'more oppressed' by homophobia than the other queer women" and "even radical women of colour spaces are riddled with stereotypes and false notions leading to a certain amount of silencing of Arab women" (Attia in Naber 2011: 169). As "racial myths depend upon the language of culture" (Razack 2008: 88), culture is taken to explain "*their* homophobia", along with related issues such as misogyny, to justify the use of force by the West (Razack 2008: 79), narratives of homophobia play an important role in anti-Arab racism (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxxi). This makes it particularly difficult to discuss sexism and homophobia in the Arab and Muslim worlds without reinforcing either "Arab bashing" or Orientalism (Naber 2011: 89). Similarly to how gender and race have tended to be treated as separate categories, taking as representative people who are privileged but for *either* their race or gender, thus theoretically erasing women of colour, the homosexual other is presumed to be white, and the racial other is presumed to be straight (Puar 2007: 32), thus theoretically erasing queer people of colour.

Furthermore, homonationalist discourses are often contradictory, and homosexuality is also brought to bear on analyses of terrorists who are frequently seen as "failed heterosexuals" who "need the promise of virgins in heaven to commit to the cause" (Razack 2008: 47). These

representations follow in the footsteps of colonial discourses casting Muslim/Arab/vaguely-"Oriental" men as "effeminate or sexually dysfunctional" (Razack 2008: 47). Not only are these practices of othering based on value-laden dichotomies, they make it difficult to explore other explanations for terrorism, such as socio-political causes (Razack 2008: 47).

As per Puar's theory of homonationalism, *Homeland* also casts homosexuality and Muslim-ness as incompatible, prompting the show's protagonist, Carrie, to attempt to leverage her knowledge of a Saudi diplomat's homosexuality in order to force his cooperation, arguing that "being gay in Saudi is like being the antichrist" (S01E10). Although this threat is ineffective, it is not necessarily because Al-Zahrani presumes that Muslim-ness is compatible with his homosexuality, but seems to have more to do with the intersection of class as he feels confident that his status would be unaffected by the revelation of his homosexuality to his wives or direct superiors, as he argues that they already know or would not care (S01E10). This incident further reinforces the association of Muslim culture and society with misogyny, as the more effective threat to ensure Al-Zahrani's cooperation is that of having his favourite daughter deported back to Saudi Arabia and no longer able to complete a Western education (S01E10). It is also interesting to consider that, in the midst of characterization of the Muslim and Arab world as deeply misogynist, Al-Zahrani's concern for this daughter may imply that his homosexuality makes him less misogynistic, and that the homophobia of the Muslim world is perhaps (unsurprisingly) entwined with its misogyny.

In sum, narratives about Muslim-ness and homophobia are central to constructing "Muslim culture" as backwards and barbaric. An example of this is the targeting of homosexuals by the "Caliphate" army on *Tyrant*, including rounding up gay men and murdering them by throwing them off roofs (S02E07); this parallels real-life targeting of gay men by ISIS/Daesh.

Cultural backwardness and homophobia is also blamed for turning repressed and closeted gay men to terrorism in order to cope with what they are taught to see as a "sin", such as in the case of Salim on *Sleeper Cell*, discussed in chapter four.

Conclusion

This research brings together many sets of literature in order to study the ways in which Muslim-ness is performed in popular culture and specifically in American television programs. These areas of literature include the aesthetic turn of International Relations; Critical Race Theory; performativity theory; and queer theory.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Who am I?

My positionality as a White, Canadian, middle-class scholar must be acknowledged. As such, it is important to note that this research does not presume to make pronouncements on Islam or Muslims, per se. What this research does study is Western, and specifically American, artefacts that circulate and (re)produce myths about Muslims by performing Muslim-ness in certain ways and by creating and reinforcing tropes about Muslim-ness. These myths are important because they influence politics in a variety of ways, from state policies to military interventions to interpersonal relationships.

Like Morey and Yaqin, I am interested in how Muslims "are stereotyped and 'framed' within the political, cultural, and media discourses of the West" as a result of the images – or tropes – that are circulated (2011: 2). In Western political discourse, Muslims are usually "spoken *for* and *represented*", but rarely given the opportunity to speak for themselves (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 2; emphasis added). This research is interested in how these representations are enacted, and what implications they might have for Western myth-making about Muslims. While this research is limited to American cases, it is expected that these cases share similarities with representations of Muslims in other Western countries, not least because many of these programs have a wide international reach.

Why Television?

Pop culture is a meaningful site to study because of its role in both reinforcing and challenging identities, especially as it can "sustain prevailing political narratives", but also provide opportunities for dissent and subversive messages (Duncombe & Bleiker 2015: 37). An assumption of the aesthetic turn in IR is the co-constitution of politics and pop culture (e.g.

Duncombe & Bleiker 2015: 37): popular culture helps to shape worldviews, and thus plays a role in political outcomes (Kiersey & Neumann 2015: 79) because it is "a crucial site for the production, circulation, and sometimes the contestation of meanings" (Shepherd 2012: 2). It is important to approach popular culture with a critical eye, as governments and other political entities often have close relationships of funding and disciplining producers of popular culture artefacts such as television and film (Dodds 2015: 53). Furthermore, popular culture can actively participate in processes of militarization (Shapiro 2008: 37; Åhall 2015). In this context, it is intimately intertwined with practices of the "War on Terror". Much like how Said established the relationship between culture and imperialism (1993) through studying European novels, there is a relationship between American television programs that portray Muslim-ness as a cause of terrorism and the modalities of the "War on Terror", including American exceptionalism and militarism. However, film or television can also offer the "possibility of resistance to official national stories" (Shapiro 1999: 123).

By approaching popular culture as myths which operate as apparent "common sense", we challenge the power structures on which they rely (Åhall 2015: 67-8, referencing Barthes; see also Weldes 2003: 6). As Weber has argued, myths rely on "what goes without saying" in order to appear to be true (2005). Thus, normalization is a form of power, as it "works through myths by appearing to take the political out of the ideological" (Kiersey & Neumann 2015: 75; referencing Weber). Shepherd argues that television and other popular media "allow an insight into ... the political processes that normalise (certain forms of) violence" (2012: 6). Thus, this project seeks to reveal and unpack the *myths* about Muslim-ness that are (re)produced in pop culture through performances of Muslim-ness.

In this work I identify myths that are iterated through performances of Muslim-ness. TV, as both an aural and visual medium, is particularly useful as it permits the study of not only spoken language, but also body language and non-linguistic signifiers (Shepherd 2012: 8). While the primary focus is on the characterizations of Muslims in these programs, these are embedded in a rich tapestry of cultural, societal, and geographical signifiers that participate in (re)producing myths about Muslim-ness.

Tropes

This research codes tropes of Muslim-ness; Laura Shepherd aptly defines a trope as: "a narrative device representing a sort of cognitive short-cut, a symbol with a widely accepted shared meaning that limits the need for further explanation or exposition" (2012: 8). Shepherd explains that the analysis of tropes "can illuminate what the ideal viewer is supposed to take for granted in each narrative world and therefore provide interesting insights about the constitution of that world's reality" (2012: 9). As such, identifying tropes of Muslim-ness helps to illuminate myths and what goes without saying for them to appear to be true (Weber 2005).

Tropes serve to make Muslim-ness legible to "Western" audiences. Because myths appear to be common sense, a trope must reflect commonly-held perceptions. In turn, it reinforces these perceptions. As Morey and Yaqin note, representations depend on "an understanding of identity that demands a performance on the part of the viewed that will meet with recognition by the viewer" (2011: 91). Tropes limit the variety of representations of Muslims, as "the *terms* of their contributions are determined beforehand" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 91; emphasis added); this places Muslims "*outside* the discursive boundaries of the nation" as the circulated images "map onto dominant political attitudes" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 113; original emphasis). Difference or otherness is indicated in a variety of ways, including through actions

like praying, or features such as beards, *hijabs*, and types of dress that not only imply "Muslim-ness", but which "stand in for the whole person" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 115). Morey and Yaqin describe these "metonymic and stereotyped elements" as visual shorthands that help to establish location; milieu (in terms of the relevant "norm" community); and to "connote cultural values that are in some way discrepant with those of the norm" (2011: 116). Unlike their Western counterparts, Muslim characters are "mediated to us via externals, by social circumstances and actions, *not* through any kind of emotional life we are invited to identify with" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 156). This is a major reason that programs are assessed holistically rather than by another method such as running scripts through content analysis software, because the connotations of juxtaposed images and body language of the Muslim characters, as well as the behaviour of other characters, are just as important as dialogue. Tropes can be used subversively if presented in order to "unsettle them and even use them to reflect back at the viewer some of the more unthinking prejudices and smug attitudes the West has been encouraged to indulge in as civilizations supposedly clash" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 175). This possibility of resistance is another reason that the broader context of a program is useful in order to grasp the nuances at play in performances of Muslim-ness.

Defining Identity through Difference

Identities are defined through difference, or through relational contrasting with what they are *not* (e.g. Campbell 1998; Hansen 2006). Self/Other distinctions are crucial to establishing identities, national and otherwise, which are also intimately intertwined with conceptions of threat and security in a mutually constitutive relationship (Campbell 1998; Hansen 2006). As such, reifications of what is deemed "Muslim-ness" is largely defined through difference: "'Muslimness' exists for us largely through *performance* and is only guaranteed by its

juxtaposition with surrounding cultural values that are different, more familiar, more 'Western'" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 176; emphasis added). Just as the performed "irrationality" and "barbarity" of the threatening Muslim Other reinforces "our" (Western) rationality and civilized nature, portraying Western subjects as level-headed and compassionate further entrenches, in its turn, the Muslim Other as an outsider who poses a threat. The narrative aspect of the performance of these tropes is also important, as story-telling is crucial to the representation of "others" – and can also be a means of resistance (Said 1993: xii). Contemporary television programs, like European novels during colonization, not only make sense of colonizing activities – today, practices of the "War on Terror" and American military intervention in Muslim countries – but also "of exotic geographies and peoples" (Said 1993: xxi). There is power in representing others (Said 1993: xxi).

Intentionality and Interpretation

It should be noted that, like other studies of popular culture within the aesthetic turn of IR (e.g. Shepherd 2012: 11), I do not attribute intentionality to authors; analysis of tropes is based upon my interpretation, which may or may not coincide with the intentions of the show's writers, or with other possible interpretations of the material. A Barthesian approach highlights the importance of repositioning the reader to engage actively with rather than be a passive recipient of the text (Fortin 1989: 191). This is important as it "empowers the readers to reflect on how the text effects their capture, how it secures their loyalty", by paying attention to *signs* and *codes of signification* in the text (Fortin 1989: 191). Weber argues that: "By 'liberating' the interpretation of a text from the sole domain of its author's intentions, texts are remotivated with plural interpretations", thus enabling critical readers to read texts "against the grain", such as with feminist readings of patriarchal texts (1999: 8). The plurality of a text refers to there being

numerous readings that are equally valid, and a denotative or literal reading should not be privileged over a connotative or figurative reading (Weber 1999: 17; drawing on Barthes). Because of the collaborative nature of writing television programs, including the receipt and use of unsolicited spec scripts by writers previously unaffiliated with the show, we can even question to what extent a unified intentionality can exist in the creation of television programs (Neumann 2003: 31). Furthermore, not only do multiple writers work on each episode, the writing team varies from episode to episode, which is particularly relevant for characterizations of main or recurring characters, as, across episodes, different writers may have distinct interpretations of the character. Furthermore, the various actors, directors, and producers can all inflect important elements into how a character may be perceived, and all may not have the same intentions about how they aim to present the character and his or her actions. In sum, the analysis of tropes does not presume to reflect the intentionality of the creators of the cultural artefact. Rather, the analysis explores how they may be read by the viewer.

Cases

In order to answer the questions guiding this project, I carried out a discursive content analysis of the representation of Muslims in American television shows of 2001 to 2015. Only seasons that were complete by end of 2015 are considered, as character arcs can often take dramatic twists and turns within a season; particularly if a program is in its first season, overall characterization, including the motives and trustworthiness of a character, may not yet be certain. For example, *Quantico*, the first season of which aired across fall 2015 and winter/spring 2016 on *ABC*, is not included in this corpus.

Like Shaheen's encyclopaedic overview of all Hollywood films depicting Arabs – he reviews over one thousand films – I completed a large project of coding the depiction of

Muslims in all American television shows featuring or dealing with Muslim characters in a sustained or recurring way during the decade and a half in question. Television programs, as opposed to other artefacts of pop culture such as cinema, music, music videos, and so on, have been selected as the site of study as in most cases television programs have been under-studied as compared with cinema; because of the wide reach of television, as a medium with a very large viewership; and because the format of television allows great opportunity for character development. One season of a television program typically has a running time of eight to sixteen hours, and a program with multiple seasons may include dozens of hours of programming; this vastly exceeds the running time of a film. As such, for an in-depth analysis of Muslim character archetypes in popular culture, television programs are an exceptionally fertile medium for study. While some programs have been more amply discussed, such as *24*, especially in the context of its portrayals of torture, many of the programs listed below have received little attention or have not been the subject of academic study.

I approached the totality of television programs of this period rather than picking and choosing particular shows at the outset to reveal: 1) larger trends of archetypal depictions of Muslims and give a better impression of how widespread or generalizable certain perceptions are, as merely studying particular shows in greater depth may miss the dimension of whether the character types present are indicative of large trends or rather resist these trends, and 2) I did not yet know what programs may be most important or revealing. I did not simply want to repeat and re-analyze the shows that have already been studied, but also to pay greater attention to programs which may not yet have been noticed by academia. The research is not segregated into its television program case studies, but is organized thematically according to character archetypes and modes of performance of Muslim-ness.

Under study are scripted television programs, including weekly comedies and dramas, but not including soap operas, reality television, news programs, or satire news programs. Reality television programs such as *All-American Muslim* and *Shahs of Sunset* could be equally interesting artefacts to study, but are not treated in this project in the interest of retaining the manageability of an already extensive corpus. A complete alphabetical listing of programs studied is below. All of these programs include Muslims as main and/or recurring characters.

An important distinction between the contribution this work makes and the contributions made by Shaheen and Alsultany is the focus on main or recurring characters[8]. For instance, Shaheen notes the common occurrence of what he calls "cameos", which are "gratuitous slurs and scenes and dialogue targeting especially sheikhs and villains" in scenarios that otherwise have nothing to do with Muslims or the Middle East (2008: 32). Alsultany looked at programs that featured Muslims, often limited to the "theme of the week", in addition to shows that featured Muslim characters more consistently, such as *24* and *Sleeper Cell* (2012). These insights are very powerful to show how widespread negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims are. This work aims to build on these insights by delving more deeply into major characters that are developed over a longer period of time.

The period under study has been selected according to considerations of scope – no more than fifteen years of material so that the volume of pop culture artefacts is manageable according to the time and length considerations of a doctoral dissertation – as well as to include important events and the years following them: the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The cut-off date of 2015 was necessary to allow completion of the project. Programs that started prior to and continued into the period under study are not studied; for example, *Oz* aired from 1997 to 2003; only the last two of six seasons were filmed after 9/11.

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[8] As well as minor Muslim characters in programs that also include main or recurring Muslim characters.

Because the Muslim characters on *Oz* were already well-established and because the program did not particularly engage with the aftermath of 9/11, it is distinct from the other programs in this corpus, which all address 9/11 and the "War on Terror" in some way or another. However, as discussed elsewhere, because negative portrayals of Muslims long precede the events of 9/11 and the context of the "War on Terror", *Oz* is a fascinating example of the portrayal of complex African-American Muslim characters, most notably in the case of Kareem Saïd, a prominent character who is arguably one of the most sympathetic characters on the show and one of the most complex Muslim characters in American television history. Although it falls outside the boundaries of this dissertation, performances of Muslim-ness on *Oz* would be worthy of future study.

This project is important and relevant in the context of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; the continued existence of and focus on international terrorism; and increasing instances of violence, hate speech, and other social tensions spurred by anti-Muslim sentiment in the Western world. Artefacts of American popular culture have been chosen as the primary source objects of study for this project because of the far reach and widespread popularity of American productions beyond the borders of the United States. This is an appropriate corpus to study due to a large sample size, as well as because of the far reach and influence of American pop culture in other countries, including Canada.

Conceptual Framework and Methodology:

Critical Race Theory and Performativity

As elaborated upon at greater length in the literature review in chapter two, this research is informed by the insights of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and performativity, as well as the aesthetic turn of IR and Barthesian myth analysis, which presume the importance of language,

discourse, and naming. CRT emphasizes the mundane, everyday nature of racism, and affirms that practices of racialization, including racist slurs, epithets, and stereotypes are powerful and damaging. Stereotypes and racializations are not only enacted in speech, but through what is *not* said, as well as through other forms of discourse and modalities of performing race. As Michael Williams (2003) has noted, images can be as important as words. In a broad sense, including speech, visual criteria, and other character details, this work looks at how American pop culture *performs* Muslim-ness. By bringing together CRT and IR's aesthetic turn, the conceptual framework for this research assumes that popular culture artefacts are worthy of study and are involved in the continuous (re)construction of racist stereotypes and structures of systemic discrimination and uneven relations of power.

Discursive Content Analysis

Although content analysis has often been caricatured as being an exclusively or mainly quantitative and positivistic method (Herrera & Braumoeller 2004; Hardy, Harley, & Phillips 2004; Laffey & Weldes 2004; etc. in the Qualitative Methods Symposium on Discourse and Content Analysis), others have affirmed that it is a qualitative method that can be employed to access underlying or latent meanings of text, taking into account considerations of context which are crucial for text interpretation (Kracauer 1952; Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Weber 1990). Johnston, meanwhile, considers content analysis a subfield of discourse analysis (2002: 62), although he characterizes it, like the aforementioned Qualitative Methods Symposium authors, as abstracting text from its context and focusing only on words or word combinations in a largely quantitative approach (2002: 77). However, content analysis does not necessarily have to abstract "content" from its context or, in other words, its discursive context which includes the relations of power which are embedded in it. While Kracauer agrees that "[o]ne-sided reliance on

quantitative content analysis may lead to a neglect of qualitative explorations, thus reducing the accuracy of analysis" (1952: 631) and that such quantitative content analysis can reduce complexity and nuance, thereby making distinctions arbitrary (1952: 632) and run the risk of over-simplification (1952: 633), these concerns are addressed by qualitative content analysis. While a quantitative approach misses the "latent meanings" in the content of a text (Kracauer 1952: 634), a qualitative approach can access the "multiple connotations", "intrinsic essence" (Kracauer 1952: 635), "underlying intentions or [the] presumable effects on the audience" of a given text (Kracauer 1952: 638). Hsieh and Shannon describe content analysis as a qualitative, "flexible method for analyzing text data", but reflect on the various ways in which it can be employed, noting that, rather than a set approach, it is better described as "a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses" (2005: 1277). As such, while the authors are familiar with its usage as a primarily quantitative method since later in the 20th century – noting that earlier in the century it was used "as *either* a qualitative *or* quantitative analysis" – it is highlighted as a method which "focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text" (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1278; emphasis added). Thus, similarly to Kracauer's (1952) distinction between manifest and latent content, Hsieh and Shannon note that the categories used in coding a text "can represent either explicit communication or inferred communication" (2005: 1278). This is contrary to the assumptions of the Symposium authors who affirm that content analysis can only be superficial (Laffey & Weldes 2004: 29) as the positivistic assumptions of (quantitative) content analysis presume that "language mirrors objects in the world" (Fierke 2004: 36).

For this research involving deconstruction of American television shows featuring Muslims, and particularly the coding of performances of "Muslim-ness", content analysis is a useful technique if approached in a more discursive (or qualitative, according to Kracauer's distinction) way. Although Herrera and Braumoeller (2004: 16), among others, argue that content analysis is not interested in power relations, this method can be used with a sensitivity to power relations and socio-political dynamics between groups. While some have argued that the two methods of discourse analysis and content analysis can go together as some measure of discourse analysis must precede content analysis in order to formulate coding guidelines (Herrera & Braumoeller 2004: 18), I argue that the reverse is also true: content analysis can be helpful in uncovering important trends and themes that can then be further analyzed through discourse analysis. Additionally, the two approaches can be combined in an approach to content analysis that is sensitive to the meanings of words, as well as non-verbal textual elements, in their context. For example:

> More qualitative forms of content analysis that do not assume highly stable meanings of words but, rather, include a sensitivity to the usage of words and the context in which they are used are compatible with discourse analysis and can, in fact, be used within a broad discourse analytic methodology in the analysis of social reality. (Hardy et al. 2004: 20)

Accordingly, I undertake a discursive content analysis in coding the representation of Muslim characters in American television shows.

A focus on representations or narratives about Muslims in American pop culture is similar to frame analysis in that it seeks to analyze perceptions, understandings, and assumptions (Johnston 2002). An "interpretative framework" may be used in order to "ascertain how others'

actions and words are to be understood" (Johnston 2002: 63). The aim to codify the archetypal representations of Muslims in American television in this project is to understand the relevant frame which, although "an individually held cognitive schema", can influence collective action "insofar as it is shared by enough individuals to channel their behaviour in shared and patterned ways" (Johnston 2002: 66). As such, while "[i]ndividual variations in the actual cognitive structure are assumed, based on variable experiences and information", attention to framing may help to construct a model, based on observation of the phenomena being studied, in this case scripted television fiction, which may be a "good fit with the general social representation" (Johnston 2002: 66).

It is important to avoid casting representations or narratives as too fixed; a criticism of Geertz has been that his conception of culture does not adequately take account of the fluidity of culture and broadly shared understandings (Wedeen 2002: 715-6). Johnston notes that "frames are both fixed cognitive structures and emergent cognitive practices"; content analysis may be used to "describe collective action frames, implicitly treating them as fixed structures captured in a moment in time" (2002: 66), but it is important to be mindful of the fluid context in which the representations were created and that they cannot be taken as a universal representation of attitudes at the time (though they can, perhaps, be taken as representative of general social trends). As such, it is important to question the representativeness of the texts studied (Gerring refers to "generality" or generalizability; 2012: 61) and question "whether the text is representative enough to generalize about its patterns" (Johnston 2002: 71).

As such, this research studies how Muslims are *framed* in American pop culture. It is useful to study portrayals of Muslims of various backgrounds, as "meta-racists" deny talking about race and instead use frameworks of "national" or "cultural suicide" vis-à-vis a discourse of

cultural barbarity (Shapiro 1999: 41). The different racial backgrounds of Muslim villains is sometimes proclaimed as an argument against the racist quality of the portrayals, but the similarities of portrayals of Muslims of different "racial" backgrounds shows convergence on a "cultural" element. This is intertwined with the popularity of Samuel Huntington's thesis of a "clash of civilizations" with Islam (1993), which, as identities are defined in opposition to Others, also narratively removes any internal foreignness in the "West", affirming its coherence through distinction with an external opposite: "Islamic civilization" (Shapiro 1999: 112, 117-8). Huntington's "clash of civilizations" (1993) is a popular frame in analyses of world politics, in both the academic and policy worlds. As Morey and Yaqin note, the "West" and "Muslims" as monoliths are caricatures projected onto diverse Muslim communities (2011: 18). They note that these reductive images are recurring (2011: 19), and agree with Said that they construct and reinforce a consensus on Islam as negative and threatening (2011: 20; Said 1981/1997). Thus, it is important to engage with frames and the content they make legible through practices of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 21). Framing sets the terms and parameters for the narratives about Muslims according to "questions of belonging, 'Otherness,' and threat" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 21). Framing is also important regarding the language used, as no language is neutral (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 30).

In my discursive content analysis, in addition to the verbal content, I am primarily interested in the characteristics of characters in order to code the archetypes according to which they are present. Additionally, recurring themes and imagery were also considered relevant. Therefore, I did not conduct a computer-assisted content analysis; while this could reveal certain trends in dialogue, I conducted a more global analysis through viewing the programs, taking note

of the dialogue, themes, imagery, character features, and character interactions, verbal and non-verbal, and how these different aspects appeared in conjunction with each other.

Discourse analysis is increasingly popular in IR, especially in poststructural approaches. A notable example of an exceptionally cogent move to elaborate a poststructural methodology of discourse analysis is by Lene Hansen (2006). Following Campbell (1998), Hansen (2006) provides a strong case for the treatment of collective identities as constructed, contingent, and relational. However, most importantly, Hansen explicitly details methodological approaches for conducting discourse analysis, or "intertextual models and their research agendas" (2006: 59), including approaches that focus on one or more of: "official foreign policy discourses" (model 1) (2006: 60); extending the analytical scope to include "the major actors and arenas within a wider foreign policy debate" (model 2) (2006: 61); "material not explicitly engaging official police discourse", i.e. "representations of foreign policy issues as they are articulated within 'high' as well as 'popular' culture" (model 3A) (2006: 62); or material "which is concerned with policy but has a marginal status" (2006: 62), including actors such as NGOs and social movements (model 3B) (2006: 63-64). In this case, it is model 3A – which includes popular culture artefacts as relevant – that is of interest.

It should be noted that popular culture artefacts are second-order representations; however, although

> popular culture rarely makes the claim of being a true representation of the real world …
> [t]his ... does not reduce its effectiveness. For a majority of people, it is namely these
> second order representations that come to play a significant role as sources of knowledge
> of politics and society. (Kangas 2009: 322, referencing Neumann & Nexon)

As Neumann and Nexon note, "If culture profoundly affects politics, then we cannot neglect popular culture, since it is within popular culture that morality is shaped, identities are produced and transformed, and effective analogies and narratives are constructed and altered" (2006: 6). As such, popular culture, including television, is an appropriate site at which to conduct discursive content analysis.

Both negative stereotypes and resistance to these stereotypes are analyzed in the television programs studied. In many cases, unproblematized or uncritically-reflected-upon reductionist tropes pervade the pop culture artefacts. In other cases, there is resistance to the negative or racist assumptions about Muslims. However, in some cases the resistance is not fully achieved and reproduces many of the same tropes that are being resisted. For example, *Sleeper Cell*'s main character is Darwyn Al-Sayeed, an FBI agent who fights terror by infiltrating a terrorist cell to take it down from the inside, and is himself a devout Muslim; however, while laudably foregrounding a Muslim who is not a villain, Darwyn's presence as the "Good Muslim" also serves to dichotomously reinforce the "Bad Muslim" stereotypes who surround and outnumber him. *Homeland* features "Good Muslims", but these are underdeveloped characters whose only traits are loving America and blind patriotism, and *not* being terrorists, while the Muslim villains are equally underdeveloped in their un- or under-explained villainy. *Homeland* leaves no space for characters to be Muslims who are critical of America, but not involved with terrorism; in *Homeland*, it would seem, "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists", to borrow a phrase from George W. Bush.

Bird (1999) reminds us that positive stereotypes can be just as damaging as negative stereotypes, as both are dehumanizing because they reduce a group of people to a presumed and limited set of characteristics, rather than portraying them as complex and nuanced individuals.

Community resists stereotypes about Muslims through the character of Abed, who is explicitly Muslim, a fact that is sometimes relevant to the plot of an episode, but is only one character trait among many, and is certainly not the feature that is most important in defining his character; his most important characteristic is his obsession with pop culture and television. Many racist statements about Muslims are explicitly condemned, for example Annie's response "That's the most racist thing I've ever heard!" to a statement about Muslims made by Shirley, implying that, as a woman, she would not be permitted to partake in the "traditional Muslim dish" Abed brought to a potluck dinner (S01E12). *Community* also provides some commentary on the far-reaching societal effects as ex-lawyer Jeff Winger reminisces that "2002 was a simpler time", explaining that any court case was made easier to win by invoking 9/11, no matter how unrelated the law-breaking to this event (S01E01). However, not all racist statements are explicitly rebuffed, leaving it to the viewer to infer whether the show's writers find such statements acceptable, or are indicating, tongue-in-cheek, that such perceptions exist but are not to be condoned.

In most cases, representations indicate that negative perceptions are widespread; this can be responded to by either conforming to the standard tropes and treating them as unproblematic, or by problematizing and challenging them. For example, in many cases *24* unproblematically features archetypal Muslim terrorists and preys on the fear of Muslims integrating into American society only to attack it from within (S04). In other cases it criticizes the racial profiling of Muslim-Americans (e.g. Nadia Yassir, S06) or depicts the ease with which non-Muslim terrorists are able to prey upon unqualified suspicion of Muslims in order to frame an innocent Pakistani Muslim as a terrorist suspect (S07). Many of these attempts to challenge assumptions are themselves problematic; for example, Nadia is argued to be trustworthy because she is a

Republican and has lived in the United States since she was two years old, despite being Muslim. This implies that she would arguably be more suspicious and more likely to be a terrorist if she were a recent immigrant or had more left-wing political views. In sum, the archetypal depictions of Muslims present many themes which are relevant to American societal attitudes, including both negative perceptions of and resistance to racist stereotypes.

Numerical Component

The appendix features a comprehensive listing of Muslim characters by program studied and the tropes they perform. A tally of the number of Muslim characters and representatives of each trope according to television program studied illustrates the salience of particular character stereotypes relative to the overall characterizations of Muslims. This numerical component is not considered as more important than or determinative of the interpretative or qualitative assessment of the performance of Muslim-ness in the programs studied, but more as an additional indicator of the iterations of the varied Muslim character tropes that are performed in popular culture. Numerical components are powerful, such as in the case of Shaheen's study in which he not only qualitatively discusses the character tropes of Arabs in cinema, but he is also able to contrast the small number of positive or neutral representations within the total number of nearly 1,100 films reviewed (2009/2001). As such, a numerical component helps to highlight the salience of other tropes and of resistance to these.

It is acknowledged that the coding of Muslim characters according to different tropes is rather subjective and certain decisions of how to classify various characters could be assessed differently by another researcher. A certain amount of arbitrariness is unavoidable, but is partly addressed by the possibility of coding characters according to more than one category (and/or sub-category, in the case of Muslim-ness as victimhood). Additionally, the qualitative part of this

research – the discussion of the different tropes and case studies that reflect them in chapters four through seven – explains how characters perform certain tropes. Furthermore, the large scale of this project – 277 unique characters – gives a great degree of confidence as to the significance of larger trends in the sense that although another researcher might make different judgments regarding some specific characters, there would likely be little impact to the overall trends and numbers.

Programs Studied (Alphabetical Listing)

24	*Lost*
Aliens in America	*Mr. Robot*
American Crime	*Shameless*
(The) Blacklist	*Sleeper Cell*
Bones	*(The) Sopranos*
Community	*Tyrant*
(The) Grid	*(The) War at Home*
Homeland	*Whoopi*
Lilyhammer	*(The) Wire*

Below is a brief description of each of the programs studied according to their portrayal of Muslims, or why each is included in this research. Some descriptions are longer than others; this reflects the relative prominence of the program in terms of its portrayal of Muslims and the extent of scholarly attention the programs have received. It is also hoped that these summaries may form a useful reference section to help readers situate the names of programs and characters as they are discussed throughout the thesis, as readers may be unfamiliar with many of the programs discussed in this research.

<u>*24*</u>: *Fox*'s *24* aired for eight seasons from 2001 to 2010, and returned for a 12-episode miniseries in 2014, which is sometimes treated as a stand-alone event, but which will be referred to in this research as a ninth season. *24* is a fast-paced counter-terrorism drama that occurs in "real time", with a standard season being a 24-hour day, and each episode corresponding to one hour.

Alsultany argues that the "ticking time bomb scenario" become a symbol of the "War on Terror" and supplies a "sense of urgent realism" (2012: 40). The "real time" narrative device also reinforces a "sense of a culture under threat from enemies seen and unseen, with imminent dangers that must be countered by any means necessary" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 147). *24* was very popular in the US and abroad (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 145) and outstripped the limited success of shows like *Sleeper Cell* and *The Grid* that were criticized for trying to educate its viewers more than merely entertaining them; *24*'s popularity and long duration are often attributed to its lack of educational value and emphasis on entertainment (Alsultany 2012: 36). As Morey and Yaqin note, *24* first aired only two months after 9/11 and one month after the announcement of the PATRIOT act; this timing was a coincidence (2011: 145), but certainly can be argued to have increased the program's relevance and popularity. Indeed, the show was found to have documented real-life impacts, including influencing political speeches and the behaviour of military cadets and young soldiers who said themselves to be patterning behaviour on the actions of protagonist Jack Bauer (Alsultany 2012: 41-2). Shaheen notes accounts that *24* "encourage[d] US military personnel in Iraq to act illegally", particularly in the context of its violent depictions of torture (2007: 50). Of course, *24* was "part of a larger field of meaning" that informed politics and society in the "War on Terror" (Alsultany 2012: 44). Jack Bauer is a famous "outlaw hero" who "break[s] rules to save the day," exemplifying a "situational morality" in which it is justified to do terrible things (Alsultany 2012: 41). *24* faced criticism regarding its portrayal of Arabs and Muslims, and responded to this in various ways, including a PSA defending the American Muslim community (Alsultany 2012: 18), and often rotated the origins of the villains within and across seasons, although Muslims posed the most frequent recurring threat (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 145; Shaheen 2008: 49).

24 was also famously criticized for its portrayals of torture and projected message of the show "that extreme measures are sometimes necessary for the greater good" (Alsultany 2012: 19; quoting a FOX executive). Although it become "more interrogative in later seasons" regarding controversial topics such as torture, it "remained one of the most shamelessly gung ho of post-9/11 dramas" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 145) with a "crude, conservative message, operating on the basis of a post-9/11 notion of America in peril", despite being "prone to disturbing moments of self-revelation" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 146). Shaheen argues that *24*, among other counter-terror shows, is "frighteningly reminiscent of those 1980s and 1990s kill-'em-all action flicks" and that such shows "continue to reinforce anti-Arab public opinion" (2008: 49).

Aliens in America: *Aliens in America* was a short-lived sitcom (2007-08) that aired on *The CW;* it was cancelled after one season. It is about a Wisconsin family that takes in Raja, a Muslim Pakistani foreign exchange student. Although poking fun at fears about Muslims in the context of the "War on Terror", *Aliens in America* is primarily a "buddy" story about two culturally divergent teens who find that they have more in common than they might have expected; they form bonds of friendship and solidarity through their shared identity as outcasts.

American Crime: *American Crime* debuted in 2015 on *ABC*, and its first season is included in this corpus. *American Crime* centers on race relations in America and discusses the perceptions, prejudices, and criminality of characters of several different racial backgrounds. The ensemble cast includes an African-American convert to Islam, Aliyah Shadeed, born Doreen Nix. Aliyah's character arc revolves around her efforts to have her brother Carter Nix released from jail and the charges against him dropped, as she believes he has been unjustly accused of murder due to a larger context of systemic racism.

The Americans: *The Americans* has been playing on the *FX* since 2013 and is scheduled to air fifth and sixth seasons in 2017 and 2018, respectively. *The Americans* is set in the 1980s in the United States. It follows two KGB agents who are part of a top-secret mission that sees them embedded in American society under the guise of regular American citizens. It is included in the corpus because the second and third seasons include a recurring Muslim character: Yousaf Rana, a Pakistani ISI agent who is targeted by the spy protagonists as a valuable source of information.

(The) Blacklist: *The Blacklist* debuted in 2013 on *NBC*. This corpus includes the first two seasons: those that had completed airing by the end of 2015. A fourth season aired in 2016-17. It follows FBI profiler Elizabeth Keen and Raymond "Red" Reddington, an infamous criminal who, in exchange for immunity from prosecution, works with the FBI to apprehend individuals on his "Blacklist" of the world's most dangerous criminals. Red's right-hand man and bodyguard is Dembe Zuma, a recurring but minor character; his Muslim-ness is implied when Red prays with him in Arabic before Dembe is nearly murdered by an enemy of Red's (S01E09).

The *Blacklist* includes a few other characters who are sometimes presumed to be Muslim, but whose religious and cultural identity is never confirmed. For instance, there is nothing to suggest that Meera Malik is Muslim as opposed to Hindu, Christian, or other. Aram Mojtabai is the victim of racial profiling when he briefly set up to be a mole (S01E11), and seen as suspicious for feeling guilty for killing a terrorist, despite the context that Aram is not a field agent and exceptional circumstances forced him to kill another human being for the first time in his life (S01E10-11). However, Aram's religious identity is never confirmed, despite the following quip he makes when babbling to his love interest, Samar Navabi, a Persian Mossad agent:

Samar: Where I come from, fear is the only deterrent.

>Aram: I'm from Delaware. No, I'm just saying. I'm actually half Jewish. Well, a quarter,
>
>really. Half-Muslim too, so... But...who's counting? (S02E03)

Especially because he refers to both Jewish and Muslims origins, Aram appears to be describing his ethnic background, and it is unclear if either "Jewish-ness" and/or "Muslim-ness" plays a significant role in informing his religious and/or cultural identity. Samar's religious identity is also ambiguous (at least within the first two seasons included in this corpus): she is from Balochistan, a predominantly Muslim area in Iran, but she is also a Mossad agent, and a Jewish identity would have made her a more obvious target for recruitment. As such, it is not entirely clear if the common ground Aram is trying to establish with her pertains to ostensible "Jewish-ness", "Muslim-ness", or both. Samar is also told that her brother was a suicide bomber (S02E07), which can frequently be used as a shorthand to imply Muslim-ness, but this is not necessarily true, and does not confirm Samar's religious identity, either. Similarly, the fact the Samar quotes a verse of the Qur'an in Arabic to a captor to encourage him to be merciful and not to kill her and her colleagues (S02E09) could stem from a Muslim identity, but could also be explained by her Iranian origins and her training as a Mossad agent, as well as a pragmatic motivation to appeal to her captor's humanity.

Bones: _Bones_ premiered in 2005 and in 2017 aired a twelfth and final season on _Fox_. It is a drama focusing on forensic anthropologist Dr. Temperance Brennan – based on real-life forensic anthropologist and author Kathy Reichs – and her team that solves murders out of the Jeffersonian Institute in Washington, D.C. in cooperation with the FBI. The program features "interns-of-the-week" who occasionally appear together, but who mostly take rotating turns being featured in episodes. One of these is Arastoo Vaziri, a Muslim Iranian-American who is a recurring character from late season four onward; this corpus includes up to the tenth season,

which concluded in mid-2015. Arastoo takes on a slightly more prominent role starting in the eighth season when his character becomes romantically involved with department head Dr. Camille Saroyan, a series regular.

Community: *Community* premiered on *NBC* in 2009, airing five seasons on *NBC* and a sixth in 2015 that aired online on *Yahoo! Screen*. One of the main characters is Abed Nadir, a Muslim of Palestinian and Polish parentage. In the early seasons, a few episodes revolve around Abed's family-based identity, his religion, and his father's expectation that he will take over the family falafel business. His primary character feature is his obsession with popular culture and difficulties understanding and interacting with others.

The Grid: *The Grid* was an American-British mini-series co-produced by the *BBC, FOX TV Studios,* and *Carnival Films* in 2004. Morey and Yaqin argue that *The Grid* has a lot in common with *24*, but with more subtlety or smoother edges in light of its transatlantic audience, although it features troubling "themes of racial purity and the dangers of miscegenation" (2011: 154). Compared to other counter-terror thrillers, Morey and Yaqin argue that *The Grid* features "unusually diverse" "Islamist terrorists", although some tropes, such as the "Fundamentalist Saudi Oil Billionaire" do appear alongside somewhat more novel character backgrounds (2011: 156). However, like on *Sleeper Cell*, the inclusion of "Good" Muslims does little to dispel the perception that many, even if not all, Muslims are terrorists, and that security concerns trump privacy and civil rights. For example, it occasionally seems to be sympathetic to Muslim Americans who are the victims of racial profiling in the context of heightened in a post-9/11 world, as with a travel agent who patiently tells the authorities to makes themselves at home at his business, and gives full access to his books and his computers, telling them: "Believe me, since 9/11 I've been the most examined business in Dearborn" (ep. 4). Like the "Good" Muslim

who is expected to help find and defeat terrorists, he assures them that he will certainly inform the authorities if he learns anything relevant pertaining to terrorism (ep. 4). However, he turns out to have been working with the terrorists after all (ep. 5/6); thus, the questionable methods of the "War on Terror" are justified because some Muslims who claim to be cooperating with security efforts are actually aiding terrorists.

"Good" Muslims like Raza Michaels are vastly outnumbered by Muslims who feel that their religion encourages or at least permits them to engage in terrorist actions, including major villain Yussef Nasseriah who goes by the name "Muhammad" and is a caricatural Muslim terrorist, most notably in arming children as suicide bombers and convincing them that they will be rewarded for killing large numbers of their enemies (ep. 5/6). *The Grid* also plays on fears of the "enemy within" through the inclusion of a blond-haired, fair-skinned Chechen terrorist, Kaz Moore, whose ultimate weapon is his non-threatening appearance. It also includes the trope of bumbling terrorists who fail to commit their acts of terror due to their own stupidity (ep. 1/2).

The Grid is heavy-handed in affirming the "goodness" of Muslims like Raza, who explicitly explains why his religion is compatible with fightinng terrorism (ep. 1/2). Reem Mutar expresses a similar viewpoint in trying to dissuade her brother, Dr. Raghib Mutar, from joining a terrorist group (ep. 3, 4). "Good" Muslims perform their "goodness" through behaviour such as chastising their loved ones for complaining about invasions of their privacy (Raza to his sister Nili, ep. 1/2); informing the authorities when they have concerns about family members experimenting in extremism (Hamid Samoudi calling the British authorities about his brother Akil Samoudi, ep. 3-4); and pressuring relatives to give up information that is useful for pursuing terror suspects, even if it jeopardizes their jobs and their very lives (Raza vis-à-vis his cousin Omar, who works at a Swiss bank through which money funding terrorism had passed, ep. 3).

The Grid also generates sympathy for the victims of terrorists, such as Reem Mutar, who is badly beaten and ultimately killed because of her brother's involvement with terrorism (ep. 4).

Homeland: *Showtime*'s *Homeland* premiered in 2011 and had aired five seasons as of the end of 2015. *Homeland* has received significant critical acclaim and "has been credited with being insightful with regards to the politics of surveillance, the fragile distinction between 'terrorist' and 'patriot', and the difficulty of pursuing the war on terror in the face of multiple sources of field-based and signals-led intelligence" and for complexity and depth in its storytelling (Dodds 2015: 56). Kundnani notes that *Homeland* has been hailed as a "liberal alternative" to shoot-'em-up counter-terrorism thrillers like *24* and that it instead explores "the psychology of radicalization"; it was also said to be President Obama's favourite show (2014: 263-4). Proponents of the show's liberal credentials point to the recurring theme that American foreign policy can sometimes be "counterproductive", highlighting that practices such as drone strikes can incur negative consequences for the United States (Kundnani 2014: 264). However, in *Homeland*'s narrative on the "War on Terror", torture may be less prominent but is still part of the protagonists' "tool kit" (Kundanani 2014: 266), and, like on *24*, largely sympathetic counter-terror agents engage in very ethically questionable activities in pursuit of the "greater good". Kundani provides a succinct summary of the program's themes:

> *Homeland*'s key plot themes are the infiltration of the US administration by Muslim extremists (a nod to Islamophobic conspiracy theories), suspicion of ordinary Muslim Americans, especially converts, and the psychological turmoil of the leading Muslim character who is caught between his all-American family and the pull of extremist indoctrination. (2014: 264)

Homeland has also received criticism for inaccurate and reductionist portrayals of the Middle East, including an "implausible" alliance between Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah (Kundnani 2014: 264) and a "ridiculous portrayal of Beirut as a terrorist enclave" (Kundnani 2014: 265). A now infamous scene depicts Beirut's Hamra Street – a busy street packed with cafés and bars – as a dusty wasteland filled with roaming tanks and armed insurgents (S02E02). Such portrayals give an "impression of terrorism as a general cultural problem in the Middle East disconnected from specific political contexts" (Kundnani 2014: 265). *Homeland* has also been criticized for problematic and negative portrayals of Muslims, casting "radicalization as closely tied to Islamic culture and identity" (Kundnani 2014: 265), and because most prominent Muslim characters are terrorists, with the exceptions of Fara (S03-04) and Ayaan (S04).

Lilyhammer: *Lilyhammer* is a Norwegian-American series that aired on *Netflix* for three seasons (2012-14). One of the main characters is Jan, who flees to Iraq in late season two and returns in season three having converted to Islam. After an arc in which he complains about discrimination as a recent "immigrant" and nearly commits a suicide bombing, Jan drops his new Muslim identity as soon as he finds a new job.

Lost: *Lost* is an *ABC* drama that aired for six seasons (2004-10). It follows the survivors of a plane crash on a mysterious Pacific island. One of these survivors and member of the principal cast of characters is Sayid Jarrah, an Iraqi man troubled by his violent past, particularly his time as a torturer for the Iraqi Republican Guard. Although Sayid is a complex and generally sympathetic character, his narrative arc does feature many tropes about Muslims, such as connections to terrorism (through an acquaintance) and political violence.

Mr. Robot: *Mr. Robot* is a drama-thriller that originally aired on the *USA Network*. It follows a group of hackers/hacktivists who aim to take down the powerful E Corp. The group includes

Trenton, a *hijab*-wearing Muslim-American who is the daughter of Iranian immigrants. Trenton is a recurring but minor character; she is positively characterized as a skilled hacker who cares about her family, but rarely speaks and is afforded little other character development. The first season aired in 2015 and is included in this corpus; a second season aired in 2016.

Shameless (U.S. version): *Shameless*, an American remake of the British program of the same name (2004-13), premiered on *Showtime* in early 2011 and began airing a seventh season in late 2016. The show follows the story of the dysfunctional family of Frank Gallagher and his six children. The program features a married Muslim couple who own and run a local shop (S01-S02). Kash is a closeted homosexual who has an affair with teenaged Ian Gallagher. Kash's wife Linda, a White convert to Islam, runs the convenience store with Kash.

Sleeper Cell: *Sleeper Cell* aired as two mini-series on *Showtime* in 2005 and 2006. The show follows Darwyn Al-Sayeed, an African-American Muslim FBI agent who goes undercover in a sleeper cell to prevent planned attacks. *Sleeper Cell* is sometimes pointed to as a more nuanced and critical alternative to programs such as *24* because they portray Muslims from a variety of ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as for featuring a sympathetic Muslim-American – African-American, no less – as its main character. Morey and Yaqin note that *Sleeper Cell* is significant for featuring the first Muslim protagonist of a thriller, and that it portrayed a loyal and patriotic Muslim-American; however, along with these "more complex" characterizations are familiar negative stereotypes (2011: 166). The show occasionally breaks stereotypes such as in overturning the "conventional visual icon of the *dangerous* mosque", but reinforces other stereotypes, such as with its Arab leader who takes orders "from 'shadowy masters' in Saudi Arabia" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 167; emphasis added). *Sleeper Cell* capitalizes

on the threat from within, as the "power of [the cell] lies not in its otherness, but in its proximity, its faithful shadowing of all things American" (Morey & Yaqin 2011:170).

(The) Sopranos: *The Sopranos* aired on HBO from 1999 to 2007, and is included in this corpus because the characters in question were introduced in 2006 (S06). The show follows New Jersey mob boss Tony Soprano and his mafia network. In later seasons of *The Sopranos,* the "War on Terror" is a recurring motif. The show includes as recurring characters Ahmed and Muhammad, who are associates of Christopher Moltisanti, Tony Soprano's protégé; they are occasionally seen frequenting the "Bada Bing!" strip club. When they buy guns and credit cards numbers through Christopher, Tony asks if he thinks they might be "Al-Qaedas" (S06E06). Christopher agrees that he had a similar concern, but his fears were dispelled because Ahmed and Muhammed were upset about the famous Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, but particularly with Muslim protesters for bringing negative attention to Muslims; they own a dog; and have government interrogators in the family (S06E06). Nevertheless, Tony Soprano does later identify them to the FBI as possible financers of terrorism (S06E19); this is the last we hear of them.

Tyrant: *Tyrant* premiered on the *FX* in 2014, and aired a third season in 2016, after which it was cancelled; the first two seasons are included in this corpus. It centers on Bassam "Barry" Al-Fayeed, the son of a long-time dictator of a fictional Middle Eastern country, who has tried to escape his family and his past while living and working in the United States as a pediatrician. He reluctantly returns to his home country with his American wife and their two teenaged children and provides guidance to his brother, Jamal, who is set to succeed their father as "tyrant" and who is the main antagonist of the program. The show features a large ensemble of Muslim

characters both within and outside the Al-Fayeed family, including Jamal's wife Leila; their son Ahmed; and his wife, Nusrat.

The War at Home: *The War at Home* is a sitcom that aired for two seasons on *Fox* from 2005 to 2007. It follows the family of Dave and Vicky Gold, and their three children. Sixteen-year-old Larry's best friend is Kenny, a closeted gay Iranian teen with a crush on Larry.

Whoopi: *Whoopi* is an American sitcom developed by and starring Whoopi Goldberg that aired for one season in 2003-04 on *NBC* before being cancelled. The show focuses on Mavis Rae, a one-hit wonder who owns and runs a hotel in New York City. A main character on the show is Nasim, an Iranian handyman who works for Rae.

The Wire: *The Wire* aired on HBO (2002-08) and profiles different types of crime in Baltimore, following various characters, including drug dealers, detectives, and politicians. It includes as a recurring character Brother Mouzone, a hit man and a member of the Nation of Islam.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MUSLIM TERRORIST/VILLAIN

Introduction: Racialized Villains

By far, the most common trope of Muslim-ness on American television is that of the villain, most often a "terrorist". Of the 288 Muslim characters studied in this project,[9] 41% can be classified as villains, terrorists, and assorted "bad guys"; this number increases to 50% if we include other "negative" characterizations, although these fall short of being "villains". "Bad guys" is a colloquial and gendered term, but it is quite apt in this instance as the overwhelming majority – 102 of 119, or 86% – are men. This category is also racialized, as 103 (87%; including 12 women) are of a "Middle Eastern" background, though this term is used loosely because it is a common feature of representations of Muslims and Arabs that diverse groups from Northern Africa to South Asia are collapsed into one racialized "brown-skinned" group, erasing distinctions between Arabs and Muslims. A particular aesthetic is created through the casting of actors of a variety of backgrounds, including Greek, Latino/a, South African, South Asian (Alsultany 2012: 10) and anyone that is deemed to fit the constructed aesthetic. Thus, "TV dramas participate in the construction of a phenotype and the fiction of an Arab or Muslim 'race' and hence the notion that Arabs and Muslims can be racially profiled" (Alsultany 2012: 9). Even though, due to a very broad range of possible features, notions of what is "Muslim-looking" or "Arab-looking" is virtually meaningless, Hollywood contributes to this imaginary of recognizing Arab and/or Muslim villains according to particular features and contexts (Shaheen 2009/2001: 13-14). As such, although "Muslim-ness" and the racialized imaginary of what "Muslims" are expected to look like *do* overlap in the majority of cases, "Muslim-ness" is taken to be the most relevant feature because the category is not limited to racialization based on physical appearance

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[9] Although there are a total of 277 unique Muslim characters, some of these are cross-listed as performing more than one trope; 288 is the number of total tropes performed.

or national origin. This group does feature a number of White Muslims, and an even smaller number of Muslim people of colour from other backgrounds (e.g. African-American, Hispanic). Interestingly, the subset of White converts, or "enemies within", reflecting 11 of 119 characters in this category (9%) is the only group that shows a relatively even division based on gender, with five of eleven characters in this category being women. These five White women are among a total of 17 Muslim women "villains". The breakdown of characters classified as villains is summarized in this table:

	"Middle Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Total: 119	91	12	6	5	5	0
% of total	77%	10%	5%	4%	4%	0%

This chapter presents the trope or spectacle of the Muslim terrorist. Gender plays an important role in the spectacle of the Muslim terrorist as portrayals of Muslim men as hyper-misogynistic and abusive towards women are important in performing Muslim-ness as villainy. The intersection of Muslim-ness with discrimination based on sexual orientation is also important, as part of this mode of Muslim-ness is the accusation of sexual deviance, sexual frustration, and closeted homosexuality, along with narratives of Muslim cultures as oppressive and homophobic. For example, this narrative resonated in the media coverage of the massacre committed by Omar Mateen at Orlando's Pulse nightclub in June 2016, which emphasized Mateen's pledge to ISIS, the homophobia of ISIS, and reports of Mateen as a closeted homosexual (see Bucktin & Wormwald 2016; Smith 2016). Class is also relevant as many terrorist leaders are or are funded by "oily sheikhs" (Shaheen 2009/2001: 15), related to portrayals of Arabs – especially Saudis – as fabulously wealthy (Shaheen 2008: 45). The portrayal of terrorism as funded by Arab oil wealth is tied to other American economic

insecurities about the Middle East (see discussion of *Father of the Bride II* in chapter three). For example, on *The Grid*, terrorists seek to destroy the economic structure of the West – which has made itself vulnerable through its dependence on Arab oil – and are funded by Saudi oil wealth. This chapter also discusses how portrayals of Muslim-ness as villainy are involved in relieving or reducing guilt about harsh security measures and the negative treatment of Muslims in the context of the "War on Terror"; this is further underscored by portrayals of Muslims as incompetent and hypocritical. Performances of Muslim-ness as villainy are particularly reductionist as Muslim-ness is presented as a built-in motivation for terrorism.

This chapter also pays specific attention to two sub-categories of Muslim villains. One of these is the trope of "the enemy within": the fear that one's Muslim neighbours might be terrorists, as well as White converts who are even more adept at hiding among "us". The other is that of the "reformed" or former terrorist, which provides a bridge between discussions of "negative" and "positive" performances of Muslim-ness.

The Spectacle of the Muslim Terrorist

The bowing to and reinforcing of expectations of racial profiling in terms of casting, costuming, and other production and directorial decisions can be framed within Barthes' notion of the spectacle. As in Barthes' analysis of wrestling, "what matters to [the] public is not what it believes but what it sees" (2012/1957: 4), according to which the emphatic obviousness of roles are exaggerated (2012/1957: 5). Barthes draws an analogy between the spectacle of wrestling and Commedia dell'Arte, in which performers "display in advance, in their *costumes* and their postures, the future contents of their role" (2012/1957: 6; my emphasis). Similarly, the casting of villains/terrorists according to the expectations of racial profiling and the use of "visibly Muslim" religious or cultural markers in costuming such as *hijabs* and *niqabs*, for women, or

"traditional" Middle Eastern or "Muslim" garb for men are part of the spectacle in which "Muslim-ness" must be performed as "exactly what the public expects it to be" (Barthes 2012/1957: 13). This includes the frequently erroneous use of the turban as a marker of presumed Muslim-ness, which is commented upon in *Sleeper Cell* (S01E01), when Darwyn defends a Sikh man from racially motivated abuse, telling the Islamophobic youth that not only are Sikhs not Muslim, Sikhs and Muslims are often in conflict with each other.

Popular culture artefacts such as cinema and television employ a visual shorthand to set up expectations of plot and storytelling by providing visual cues to imply that a character is Muslim and thus that they may be up to no good. Such visual shorthands can include racialized expectations; visible markers of Muslim-ness in terms of clothing; showing a character praying; cuts to mosques and minarets; overlaying a scene with audio of the call to prayer; and so on. Another storytelling shorthand and aspect of the spectacle of the Muslim terrorist is the phrase *"Allahu Akbar"* ("God is great"), which is regularly shouted by villains in all of the counter-terror programs studied. In just two words, a program can draw on narratives from both the "real" world and the mythology of the television program – the "reel" world, as Shaheen would call it (2009/2001) – to imply the essentials of what the viewer needs to know about this villain and their motivation. Arabic phrases such as *"Allahu Akbar"* are often used to suggest why a villain has just, for example, created an explosion, or to create tension and suggest that the character is *about* to do something violent or suspicious, by implying religious fanaticism. The spectacle of the evil terrorist is very dramatic, such as in the opening scene of *The Grid*'s finale in which the main villain outfits young children as suicide bombers, providing the viewer with the thrill of revelling in our darkest fears about Islamic terrorists' disregard for even the most innocent human life (ep. 5/6). As argued in *The Grid*: "human life means nothing to *these*

people" (ep. 1/2; emphasis added). Barthes argues that the "wrestler may irritate or disgust, [but] he never disappoints" in fulfilling the public's expectations according to the themes of the wrestler's mythology (2012/1957: 13). Similarly, counter-terror programs cannot disappoint their audiences and thus must deliver Muslim villains and terrorists as they are expected, in terms of racialized appearance, costumes, imagery, explosions, and so on.

Counter-terror programs provide a barrage of imagery in which Muslim villains frequently re-enact the imagery of "real-life" terrorism videos which justify recent or anticipated attacks, or in public beheading videos. Alsultany argues that this reflects a financial goal: the need to keep viewers interested and watching (2012: 27). As Duncombe and Bleiker note, there are "striking parallels" between terrorist propaganda videos, and specifically ISIS beheading videos, and the *Homeland* opening sequence (2015: 36). According to Duncombe and Bleiker, for both real-life terrorist-produced videos and the *Homeland* sequence, the "desired emotional impact is one of fear and anxiety" and to present "the post-9/11 world as one of uncertainty, misinformation and violence" in which "the US can no longer protect or provide security for its citizens" (2015: 36). Programs such as *24* (e.g. S04E02) and *Sleeper Cell* (e.g. S02E01) often use imagery associated with the videos produced by terror groups, including masked men holding weapons, standing in front of flags with Arabic calligraphy on them – often the actual flags of Hamas, Daesh, or Al-Qaeda, or similar flags (e.g. *24*, S04E19). As with the collapsing of many ethnicities into one "Middle Eastern" imaginary, or the essentializing of "Middle Eastern" countries, flags with Arabic calligraphy are often used carelessly or without much explanation. Parallels in terms of terror group recruitment videos help to cement the links between real-life terrorism and the situations of the television program, and thus help to raise the emotional stakes.

Razack highlights the gendered dimensions of the *spectacle* of "dangerous" Muslim men (2008: 3). She argues that the "dangerous Muslim man" is one of three allegorical figures of the "War on Terror" and so-called "clash of civilizations", along with the "imperilled Muslim woman" and "civilized European" (2008: 5). The "dangerous" Muslim man is perceived as dangerous even according to the mere "*potential* to commit terrorist acts" (2008: 4; original emphasis). As such, Muslim men are subject to "pre-emptive punishment" due to their "profiles" (Razack 2008: 29). This implicit and explicit justification of Muslims as subject to suspicion and violations of civil rights is important in how both the real-life "War on Terror" functions, as well as how it is conducted in its televised allegories. This will be explored further in the following chapter as even "good" Muslims are regarded suspiciously because of their "profile": being Muslim. Such profiles also affect those who are *perceived* as Muslim, including non-Muslim Arabs and Sikhs who have been victims of hate crimes perpetrated by individuals who believe them to be Muslim (see Goodstein & Niebuhr 2001; Grossman 2012). For example, Balbir Singh Sodhi, an Indian Sikh man, was shot and killed in Arizona following the 9/11 attacks (Lewin 2001).

Similarly to Razack's "dangerous Muslim man", Morey and Yaqin describe the trope of the bearded, duplicitous Muslim "terrorist who lives among 'us' the better to bring about our destruction" (2011: 2). Gender is crucial to the trope of the dangerous Muslim man as Muslim men are perceived as "irredeemably fanatical, irrational, and thus dangerous" and are "marked as deeply misogynist patriarchs who have not progressed into the age of gender equality, and who indeed cannot" (Razack 2008: 16). Such representations reflect a colonial logic and depend on "the racial notion that 'they' are not like 'us' and owing to their natures/cultures are likely to erupt into violence against us" (Razack 2008: 31). Thus, as discussed below, the revelation of a

character's Muslim-ness is tantamount to a confirmation of their villainy, such as in the case of Brody on *Homeland* (S01E02). Such characterizations are also intertwined with other media portrayals of Islam as an "intolerant, segregationist, 'medieval,' fanatic, cruel, anti-woman religion" (Said 1993: 295). Mediated images impact intercultural relations, and racism is fed by "images of Muslims as threatening, untrustworthy terrorists" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 4). Importantly, such negative portrayals are powerful even when such stereotypes are questioned, as the association between Muslim-ness and terrorism is nevertheless repeated (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 4). As such, because of this fundamentally threatening "otherness", it is important to regulate sympathy for Muslim men (Alsultany 2012: 16). Even when Muslim characters embedded in a context of terrorism are humanized or treated sympathetically, they cannot escape the Good/Bad binary which may challenge, but not overturn, cultural assumptions of the Arab/Muslim "bad guy" (Alsultany 2012: 31).

Extreme misogyny and abuse of women is part of the spectacle of the Muslim villain, and thus helps to regulate sympathy for the dangerous Muslim man. This dynamic also produces the parallel trope of female Muslim-ness as victimhood (see chapter seven). Arab and Muslim societies are portrayed as deeply patriarchal in contrast to a "progressive" West, often implied by the presence of women in various positions of authority. For instance, *24* projects an image of a post-racial and gender-equal American society by featuring people of colour and women in the American presidency, as directors of the Counter Terrorist Unit, and elsewhere. As Alsultany notes, "[p]rojecting a multicultural U.S. society is [a] strategy to circumvent accusations of racism while representing Arabs and Muslims as terrorists" (2012: 26). Because patriarchy promotes violence against women and encourages men "to channel frustrated aggression in the direction of those without power – women and children" (hooks 1981: 105), Muslim women are

predominantly portrayed as victims of patriarchal Muslim men. Notions of masculinity are very important in performances of Muslim-ness, and terrorists often refer to becoming a "man" as one of the goals and effects of engaging in terrorist activity (e.g. Kaz on *The Grid*, ep. 1/2).

Tyrant's Jamal Al-Fayeed performs the spectacle of the brutish Arab/Muslim villain. To list only a few examples: to confirm the virginity of his son's bride, Nusrat, he rapes her at her wedding (S01E01); he threatens and tortures Nusrat's father because he defends her honour and asks for a quiet divorce (S01E05); he serially rapes a woman for many years, often making her husband and children wait outside (S01E01); he strangles a woman to death after sleeping with her because she has seen too much of his vulnerability (S01E07); he viciously attacks an old Sheikh to whom he is losing an election – and ensures that the Sheikh does not survive (S01E06-07); and he is paranoid and tries to have his own son killed because he no longer trusts him, and accidentally kills his own mother in the process (S02E10). Although he is a secular and not Islamist tyrant, Jamal embodies the misogyny, cruelty, barbarism, and ignorance imputed to Arabs and Muslims according to a long tradition of colonial Orientalism, and which continues to inform the imaginary of the Muslim terrorist/villain. Shaheen has argued that television perpetuates a few basic myths about Arabs, including that they are "fabulously wealthy", "barbaric and uncultured", "sex maniacs", and that they "revel in acts of terrorism" (2008: 45); Jamal performs these tropes (with the exception of terrorism; nevertheless, he does revel in other acts of violence). However, unlike the majority of the other villains in this chapter, Jamal is not motivated by a religious ideology, but rather by a sense of entitlement in succeeding his father, the previous long-time dictator of the fictional oil-rich Middle Eastern country of Abbudin, and a desire to maintain his family's wealth and power. Class is at play here: Jamal's tyranny would not be possible without his economic, social, and political position. It has been noted that there

are many parallels between the fictional Jamal Al-Fayeed and real life Uday Hussein, eldest son of Saddam Hussein (Jones 2014). Uday was notorious for his brutality and for practices of "murder, rape and torture" (Goldenberg 2003). Interestingly, Jamal is humanized in a number of ways as a man who longs for the love and acceptance of his brother. However, although he sometimes tries to fight his baser instincts, most of his "good" actions – such as refraining from using violence against civilians or trying to hold democratic elections – are not motivated by a sense of morality but by seeking his Westernized brother's approval, and he ultimately gives in to his "barbaric" nature. He is also motivated by his own insecurity and the fear of appearing weak. Thus, Arab/Muslim patriarchy and its embedded toxic masculinity once again rears its ugly head as Jamal is easily encouraged to act as a villain (or tyrant) by the need to be perceived as a "man" (e.g. S01E01). In sum, although not a terrorist like most of the characters discussed below, Jamal is certainly a villain and illustrates the intersection of race, gender, and class in the performativity of Muslim-ness as villainy, as he is brutish and violent as per a stereotypically orientalist imaginary; he is a misogynist and a rapist; and all of his wrongdoing is made possible by his fabulous wealth and being the heir to a tyrannical authoritarian ruler.

The hyper-misogyny of terroristic Muslim men is part of the need to regulate sympathy towards them, and highlights the perception that Muslim terrorists are merely sexually frustrated by their repressive culture and just need to "get laid" (Alsultany 2012: 100; citing Bill Maher); as such, terrorism is seen a sexual problem rather than a political one (Alsultany 2012: 101). Programs do sometimes reference the notion that terrorists are motivated by the promise of seventy-two virgins in paradise (e.g. *Sleeper Cell* S02E04), thereby implying that they are sexually frustrated and not satisfied by sex in this life. The homophobia of Middle Eastern countries is also alluded to, and *Homeland* goes so far as to assert that "being gay in Saudi

Arabia is like being the antichrist", and counter-terror agents attempt to use the threat of outing a Saudi official as gay as leverage to manipulate him, as they assume this revelation will threaten not only his job, but his life (S01E10). Widespread homophobia affects one's opportunities in the Middle East: *Tyrant*'s Abdul carefully keeps his homosexuality a secret for fear of losing the social position that he has built for himself (S01E04). However, the extreme homophobia of Islamist groups, such as *Tyrant*'s ISIS/Daesh-inspired "Caliphate", has even more serious repercussions: Abdul and other gay men are rounded up and murdered simply for being gay (S02E07). These portrayals of Muslim villainy as one of violent homophobia also implicitly remind us that such barbaric ignorance is tied to the backwardness of Islam, and that such intolerance is unacceptable in the United States and the West in general.

The theme of sexual perversion and failed heterosexuality is further implied in the ultimate "Otherness" of Muslim terrorists "by their disregard for families and the consequences of their actions for wives and children"; they are not only failed heterosexuals, but failed father figures (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 146). For example, not only does terrorist Syed Ali allow himself to be tortured, but he allows one of his children to be (apparently) killed before he will provide information to the counter-terror agents (S02E12; Morey & Yaqin 2011: 151). Even more dramatically, *24*'s Navi Araz disowns and tries to kill his own son because Behrooz is unwilling to kill innocent people: "you're weak and you stand for nothing" (S04E10). This lack of compassion is underscored by the fact that while Navi is willing to kill his wife and son, his wife prioritizes protecting her son, even though she also believes deeply in their "cause" (S04E07). These examples are in stark contrast with the White protagonist's concern and willingness to do whatever it takes to ensure the safety of his wife and daughter, most notably providing Jack Bauer's primary motivation in the first season of *24*. Muslim fathers are also shown to be

backward in other ways, such as limiting the freedoms and opportunities of their (female) children. For example, *Sleeper Cell*'s terrorist leader Saad bin Safwan tells his daughter to wear a *hijab* and an *abaya* (a loose, full-length garment) in public, despite her laments that she prefers her old clothing; he also makes her burn her drawings because he argues that they distract her from loving God (S02E05).

Another failed father can be found in the sitcom *The War at Home*, although sitcoms most often perform Muslim-ness in the mode of the "friendly cultural stereotype". On *The War at Home*, Achmed is a homophobic Iranian father whose response to his son Kenny's revelation that he is gay is: "Get out of my house, you're dead to me" (S02E11). Kenny's parents seem particularly backward as even his neighbour and his best friend's father, protagonist Dave Gold, who is himself "humourously" (very problematically) sexist, racist, homophobic, and abusive towards his children, takes Kenny in as part of his family (S02E11). Achmed is a controlling patriarch who forbids his wife from seeing their son; Dave's wife Vicky tells Kenny's mom that she would kill her husband if he tried to forbid her from doing anything, but Kenny's mom reiterates that she "cannot go against Achmed" (S02E17). (As shall be discussed in greater detail in chapter seven, the passive female Muslim victim is the narrative counterpart of the abusive and patriarchal Muslim male.) Although Achmed does eventually decide to let Kenny come home, he does so only reluctantly and because otherwise child services would put Kenny in foster care; he reiterates that he still cannot truly accept his son (S02E17). Although homophobia exists in all cultures, Kenny's Muslim family certainly appears more backwards than American families, even one as dysfunctional as the Gold family. Dave Gold may be racist, sexist, and homophobic, and he may bully and verbally and emotionally abuse his children, but even he would not *disown* a child for being gay.

Muslim-ness and Sexual Orientation

The most developed example of the intersection of sexual orientation with Muslim-ness as villainy is the case of Salim on *Sleeper Cell*. Salim is a gay terrorist, and the show is very explicit about reinforcing the link between the rejection of homosexuality by Islam and Muslim cultures, and Salim's inability to accept himself. This internal turmoil informs his decision to both lash out and seek atonement through terrorism. Salim is characterized as "miserable" and angry, and treats women disrespectfully when he believes that they behave inappropriately according to expectations of Muslim women (S02E04). He is also aggressive and disrespectful in other ways, such as when he addresses the African-American protagonist with a racial slur, and is upset to the point of murderous rage by an Imam who preaches tolerance of Shia Muslims (S02E04). He has sex with men, but later screams, cries, and begs for God to deny his desire (S02E04). He affirms that where he comes from – he is a British Iraqi – he and his lover would be stoned and thrown from the highest bridge (S02E05). It is clear that Salim's repressed homosexuality fuels his rage, as he nearly risks the mission by giving into his anger to kill an Imam he sees as a heretic; Darwyn stops him and tells him that killing the Imam will not change who Salim is (S02E04). It is also implied that familial and cultural rejection have exacerbated Salim's shame and rage and driven him towards terrorism, as he had previously been sent to a "fundamentalist madrassa in Toronto" after causing a scandal through having an affair with a man in London (S02E04). Salim is very reserved with his lover Jason, and rejects any kissing or affection outside of the act of sex (S02E06). Jason suggests that homosexuality is not necessarily wrong: perhaps Salim cannot control his desire because he is not meant to, and God made him that way (S02E05). Salim rejects this notion, arguing that God "only forgives you completely if you do something like take in orphans or martyr yourself in battle" (S02E05). While we have no

insight as to why good deeds, such as taking in orphans, are not considered by Salim, it is clear that his motivation to become a suicide bomber is his desperate need to atone for the "sin" of homosexuality. Salim does attempt to carry out a suicide bombing, using a picnic date at the Hollywood Bowl with Jason – and thus being willing to kill his lover along with hundreds of other innocents – as a cover to blend in and to hide his explosives in a cooler, but he is stopped by protagonist Darwyn, and shot in the head by another agent (S02E07). Although Darwyn has saved the civilians that Salim intended to kill, he seems devastated to have been unable to save Salim. *Sleeper Cell*'s Salim provides an unambiguous cautionary tale of the evils and dangers of oppressive, homophobic Muslim-ness. The implied moral is that cultural and religious rejection, self-hatred, and sexual frustration can push young men to commit terrible crimes, especially if their ideology leads them to believe that this is the path to their salvation.

Villainy Justifies Harsh Security Measures

Much like how America needed to soothe its national conscience with the myth of the "Bad Injun" in order to blame the victim for the ills of colonization (Fanon 2008/1952: 125), the portrayal of Muslim villains and tropes like the Muslim terrorist play an important role in relieving potential American guilt about the "War on Terror". For instance, portrayals of villains using human shields place the blame on terrorists for civilian deaths. Negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims are easily justified as they are part of a decades-long history of representing them as "anti-American villains who relish in blowing up people and buildings" (Shaheen 2008: 47). Presenting Arabs and Muslims as villains makes it easier to reconcile the violence of the "War on Terror", including wars abroad, unlawful detentions at Guantanamo, and violations of civil rights in the United States. As Shaheen notes, Arabs and Muslims are cast "as backward religious radicals who merit profiling, imprisonment, torture, and death" (2008: 47). Even when

Americans commit atrocities within the context of the "War on Terror", terrorists are blamed for having provoked the situation in the first place. For example, on *Homeland,* when an American drone strike kills forty civilians at a wedding in Pakistan, the show's protagonists argue that the true blame lies with the terrorist they were aiming to kill with the strike – that he knowingly endangered civilians by being in the same place as them, and that anyone who associates with him should be aware of the risk (S04E01).

Contemporary portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in pop culture are not substantively new, but reflect continuity with the legacy of colonialism and orientalism. As Said has illustrated, the Arab world – along with India in the Eurocentric imaginary of the "East" – has long been portrayed as foreign, exotic, irrational, and deviant (1978). Because of British colonial interest in India, the Middle East, and North Africa, the Muslim Other has occupied an important place in this imaginary, and was long portrayed as "barbaric, degenerate and tyrannical, characteristics that were thought to be rooted in the characterization of Islam as a supposedly false and heretical theology" (Miles & Brown 2003: 27). Muslim terrorists are typically portrayed as irrational; this distinguishes them from other kinds of villains, even in counter-terrorism thrillers such as *24*, because villains are always ruthless and usually "evil", but they are not necessarily "irrational". For example, in the context of negotiating a hostage situation, Saul says of Haissam Haqqani, a major villain on *Homeland*: "We can't assume he's a rational actor" (S04E10). This irrationality is key to the performance of Muslim villainy, most obviously reflected in the practice of suicide bombing. Most villains are self-serving and seek their own benefit including, as a minimum, their own self-preservation. Indeed, it is a staple of crime dramas to convince suspects to confess their crimes and those of others in order to avoid or reduce jail time and other consequences of criminal behaviour. Muslim terrorists are typically portrayed as, at a minimum, willing to die for

their cause, if not as suicide bombers who intend to do exactly that. Therefore, if self-preservation is considered rational, being willing to die is irrational.

In addition to the perceived role of Islam, Arabic culture – not only historically, but in contemporary times – has also been blamed for its "alleged propensity to violence, its culture of shame," and for being an obstacle to entering modernity (Said 1993: 260). Said notes that Arabs have long been essentialized as "basically, irrecusably, and congenitally 'Other,' [with] racist overtones" in projecting an "'Arab' anti-democratic, violent, and regressive attitude to the world" (Said 1993: 261). This idea of culture as a determiner of anti-democratic attitudes is also contrasted with narratives of Israeli democracy, which reinforces perceived links between Palestine and terrorism (Said 1993: 261). Although Palestine is rarely named, being Palestinian can also be a shorthand for an individual's rationale to participate in terrorism, without much explanation of the geopolitical situation being required, such as in the case of Roya Hammad on *Homeland*. Aside from brief references to the death of her grandfather and her family's loss of land due to the occupation, Roya's motivations are not explained further, and she refuses help from Carrie, instead raging and shrieking in Arabic, and indeed appearing quite irrational and "savage" (S02E11). Arabs are "assumed to be inferior, less civilized than the Israeli or Euro-American, and therefore less deserving of basic human rights"; this is exacerbated by the "special" relationship between the United States and Israel, resulting in a "particularly American brand of Orientalism" (Saliba 2011: 191).

Contemporary portrayals of Arabs and Muslims as villains/terrorists in American cinema and television is part of a decades-long "cultural war" against them: "appalling racist caricatures of Arabs and Muslims suggest that they are all either terrorists or sheikhs, and that the region is a large arid slum, fit only for profit or war" (Said 1993: 301). In the 1990s, Said argued that Arabs

were represented only in "a handful of dehumanizing stereotypes, all of them rendering the Arabs essentially as one or another variant of Saddam" (1993: 301). As such, the context of the "War on Terror" may fuel and exacerbate but did not *create* negative portrayals of Muslims.

Razack notes that the figures of the dangerous Muslim man, the imperilled Muslim woman, and the civilized European tell a story about a civilization "obliged to use force and terror to defend itself against a menacing cultural Other", which establishes the basis for "the expulsion of Muslims from political community", along with a "rise in anti-Muslim racism" (2008: 5). This expulsion is enacted through the "intensification of surveillance, detention, and the suspension of rights for those who are 'Muslim-looking'" (Razack 2008: 5). In addition to post-9/11 security measures that targeted Muslims and individuals from the Middle East, this notion of expelling Muslims from society had clear resonance in the 2015-16 American Presidential campaign. Despite mixed reviews for Donald Trump's plan to "ban Muslims" from the United States (e.g. Berman 2015; Johnson & Weigel 2015), such assertions, especially in the wake of events such as the December 2015 San Bernardino shootings (e.g. Zimmerman 2015), garnered Trump a groundswell of support which was crucial to his nomination as the Republican Party's presidential nominee. As such, anti-Muslim sentiment and the desire to expel Muslims from political community is not limited to certain "radical" individuals, but clearly resonated with a much larger audience with an appetite for such measures and discourses.

As Morey and Yaqin note, difference is understood racially, and the "Other-who-disrupts-the-nation" is "recognized and marked out as visibly different" – according to markers such as skin tone, clothing, etc (2011: 37). Alsultany notes that "simplified complex representations", such as counter-terrorism dramas, may sometimes "appear to challenge or complicate former stereotypes" but these same shows "promote logics that legitimize racist

policies and practices, such as torturing Arabs and Muslims" (2012: 21-2). Razack does not explicitly address the fate or treatment of those who are not "Muslim-looking", such as Caucasian converts. As discussed above, it is important to note that one can be deemed "Muslim-looking" according to a racial profiling imaginary, such as in the marking of "Brown" bodies as Muslim, but also by other visible markers such as clothing associated with "Muslim-ness", which can include individuals of any racial appearance. However, "Middle Eastern" Muslims are doubly "other" compared to White American Muslims and are typically denied the sympathy and voice that the latter are sometimes afforded.

Links between Muslim-ness and terrorism are also reinforced by regular juxtaposition of images of acts of terror and of Muslims praying, shots of minarets, and audio of the call to prayer; such cuts and juxtapositions imply a causal connection between religion and terrorism (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 60). Accordingly, Muslim men are presented "as violent, fanatical fundamentalists who enjoy reading Quranic verses just before they start shooting women and children" (Zaatari 2011: 71). Counter-terrorism dramas occasionally attempt to challenge the "common conflation of Arab and Muslim identities" by the inclusion of "diverse" Muslim identities (Alsultany 2012: 23), such as White (e.g. Brody on *Homeland*; Tommy, Christian, and Mina on *Sleeper Cell*; the Al-Harazi family on *24*), Hispanic (e.g. Benito on *Sleeper Cell*), and gay terrorists (e.g. Salim on *Sleeper Cell*). However, these characters all share the quality of "Muslim-ness", which makes this the most important characterization of these villains. Despite these efforts, the conflation of Muslims with Arabs, or the expectation that Muslims will fit a certain racial appearance, persists. Programs also frequently deal with a fictional "Middle Eastern" or "Muslim" country in an effort to avoid offending real-life individuals from or with parentage from that country; a famous example is that of "Qumar" on the *West Wing* (Alsultany

2012: 22-6). Other examples from the programs studied in this research include the "Islamic Republic of Kamistan" on *24* (S08), Abbudin on *Tyrant*, or simply avoiding the naming of a specific country (e.g. *24*, S02). However, avoiding the naming of or creating fictional countries, which appear to be composites of real "Middle Eastern" and/or Muslim countries, further entrenches the notion that all Muslim countries and societies are similar and interchangeable. It is important to remember that ignorant and negative representations of Islam and of the Middle East are not a product of 9/11: Razack highlights that exclusionary and discriminatory treatment of Muslims is not qualitatively new since 9/11 and the "War on Terror", but is part of "the *ongoing* management of racial populations" and part of a much larger history of "the encounter between the West and its racial Others" (2008: 6; original emphasis). Similarly, Morey and Yaqin discuss the post-9/11 renewal – not birth – of orientalist stereotypes which distort aspects of Muslim life (2011: 2-3).

Many programs, especially those that are more often perceived as "nuanced", such as *The Grid*, with its "surface rhetoric of tolerance" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 158-9), make an effort to show that "not all Arabs [and Muslims] are terrorists, and not all terrorists are Arabs" or Muslims, and yet this remains the only context in which Arabs and Muslims are portrayed (Alsultany 2012: 27). As such, the programs studied are limited in their ability to challenge stereotypes, and the assumption of causal connections between Islam and terrorism remains persistent and unquestioned (Alsultany 2012: 27). Even in shows in which the Muslim character's arc has nothing to do with terrorism, the assumption of such connections is raised. For example, in a flashback episode of *Lost*, it is shown that Sayid once helped the CIA fight terrorism because of a personal connection: one of the terrorists was his college roommate (S01E21). Thus, even when Muslims are not portrayed as terrorists, they cannot entirely avoid

this connection, and it behoves any "good" Muslim to actively participate in the fight against terrorism. This expectation that Muslims should help fight terrorism – according to an "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" logic, to refer again to the famous phrase by George W. Bush – is further explored in the following chapter. Muslims are also presented as guilty en-masse as supporters of terrorism. For example, on *Homeland*, terrorist leader Haqqani is greeted home to his village in Pakistan with cheering crowds, flowers, and men joyously waving guns in the air (S04E07). Such scenes imply that Muslim "civilians" are not truly innocent and share the guilt of terrorism by harbouring terrorist fugitives and celebrating their endeavours. Racial profiling according to Muslim-ness also frequently ends up vindicated: for instance, on *The Grid*, an Iraqi Muslim travel agent patiently laments that he and his business have been carefully scrutinized since 9/11 and freely offers counter-terror agents full access to his office and his books (ep. 4). Although this reflects the behaviour of "good" Muslims who allow their rights to be violated in the name of the greater good, the shopkeeper at Dearborn's "Makkah travel" *is* indeed aiding the terrorists (ep. 5/6).

Muslim Villains: Incompetent Hypocrites

Muslim terrorists are portrayed as deeply hypocritical, which underscores the illegitimacy of their actions. While they claim to promote virtue and police the sexuality of women, they are themselves adulterers, rapists, and murderers. *24*'s Navi Araz stops to judge a woman for having an affair while he is in pursuit of his wife and child with the intention of murdering them (S04E09). *Sleeper Cell*'s Christian serially cheats on his wife (S01E02; S01E06) and blames the women he sleeps with for his own infidelity (S01E02). Even sympathetic and "good" Muslim protagonist Darwyn on *Sleeper Cell* acts hypocritically, and breaks up with his girlfriend when he learns that rather than being a widow, she has been separated for many years from her

husband who is in jail; Darwyn considers this adultery, but she points out that he also considers premarital sex a sin, and they have been sleeping together (S01E07). Islamic terrorist cell leaders on *Sleeper Cell* employ prostitutes (S01E07). *The Grid*'s Yussef Nasseriah is asked by one of his Saudi Al-Qaeda funders if he has "ever stepped foot in a mosque", despite his pretension to be the "champion of the downtrodden Muslim" (ep. 1/2). Nasseriah, in turn, criticizes his Saudi funders, as OPEC countries hoard oil wealth while their fellow Muslims starve (ep. 1/2). *Tyrant*'s "Caliphate" leader Abu Omar abducts women with the intention to rape them (S02E05-06). *Tyrant*'s Ihab Rashid aims to overthrow the government because of its corruption and violence against civilians, but in the process himself becomes a violent religio-political leader (S02E04 onward). *The Grid* argues that terrorists hypocritically violate the rights of others while demanding the respect of their own: "people like you who really don't care about other people's rights start bleating on about their own as soon as they get caught" (ep. 4). In this last instance, this hypocrisy is also a defence of illegal detention and questioning of Muslim suspects.

In a related vein, *24* suggests that human rights organizations can impede more important efforts to stop imminent terror attacks, such as when a terrorist leader calls a lawyer from "Amnesty Global" in a deliberate effort to prevent the urgently-needed interrogation of a witness who has information that could help to stop the terror attack; he is angrily dismissed as "some P.C. lawyer" who is preventing the agents from doing their jobs (S04E18). Of course, in the high-stakes worlds of these counter-terror programs where there *is* always an urgent need to stop terrorists, there is little narrative room to explore the importance of human and civil rights without contrasting them with the ostensibly greater imperative of preventing terrorist attacks. *The Grid* does suggest that sometimes large-scale racial profiling and violation of civil liberties can also be an over-reaction: "everyone talks about process until something happens. Civil

liberties, gotta have them, until a dirty bomb goes off and they want everybody with a five o'clock shadow locked up" (ep. 5/6). Nevertheless, the bottom line of counter-terror shows like *The Grid* is that, even if "everybody with a five o'clock shadow" is not worthy of suspicion, counter-terror agents must do whatever they have to in order to prevent attacks. As stated frankly on *24*, when one character asks what happens when innocent people get caught in the net of ethnic-profiling security measures: "Security has a price. Get used to it" (S06E01). Such exchanges can certainly be read as critiques of a security mentality and that show writers and producers may intend for the audience to find this simplistic thinking problematic; however, as discussed in chapter three, the intentions of show creators – if a coherent intentionality can be presumed to exist – is beyond the scope of this research. Furthermore, security-based discourses can be strengthened by storytelling tropes in ways at odds with the author's intentions. Even where a critique of security logics may be intended or interpreted, the overwhelming preponderance of Muslim villainy and the ultimate justification of the questionable methods of government agents reinforce the logic of racially profiling Muslims and Middle Easterners as fundamental risks to security. In counter-terrorism, the ends justify the means.

In addition to being hypocrites, Muslim villains are also incompetent: they are "bad" at being terrorists. This reflects continuity in a long history of portraying Arab villains as poor shots (Semmerling 2006: 181) and generally bumbling and incompetent "bad guys" who are easily taken down by the Western heroes, who are more competent and able, as well as being morally superior.[10] The heroes of counter-terror shows can take down many terrorists while usually avoiding being shot themselves; the ineffectiveness of Muslim terrorists suggests their incompetency. *Homeland*'s Brody (discussed below) only survives long enough to more-or-less

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[10] Of course, this is a common feature of villains and heroes in general, in action films from *Die Hard* to *The Lord of the Rings*. Nevertheless, because this trope is over-represented in portrayals of Muslims, its effects remain worthy of attention – even if this research certainly does not suggest that Muslims are the only villains presented in this way.

rehabilitate himself and help the CIA to fight terrorism because he fails at being a suicide bomber, when a technical failure prevents him from blowing up himself and many high-ranking American officials (S01E12). Blundering terrorists deny the competency of Muslim villains to independently carry out actions, and the protagonists usually foil their plots. For example, on *The Grid*, bumbling terrorists accidentally kill themselves and others in a hotel by smoking while preparing a biological weapon and accidentally releasing sarin gas (ep. 1/2). Furthermore, programs – most notably *24* – also sometimes use the strategy of "flipping the enemy", i.e. revealing that the Arab and/or Muslim villains were actually pawns of American or European terrorists (Alsultany 2012: 23-4). However, this does nothing to rehabilitate these characters, as they are still willing to and do carry out terrible actions. Thus "flipping the enemy" only serves to deny their agency as actors. When villains are pawns of more powerful actors, they are stripped of their power and intelligence, and are reduced to the status of ignorant and manipulable thugs. In sum, not only are Muslim villains evil and misogynistic, they are also hypocritical and incompetent.

Muslim-ness: A Built-In Motive for Terror

　　While "reformed" terrorists, such as *Homeland*'s Brody, may be given a voice to express the reasons for which they joined terrorist organizations, this is an exception and not the rule for villains: they are typically one-dimensional characters who have no motivation for their involvement in terrorism beyond abstract, unexplained fanaticism and hatred for "America" or the "West". As Alsultany notes, terrorists only provide abstract references to freeing Arab countries from US influence, and this motivation remains particularly vague because viewers do not see or know much about these situations (2012: 30). Although some programs raise questions about the legitimacy of violence perpetuated by the United States – for example, *24* interrogates

the use of torture, while *Homeland* addresses the ethics and margins of error of drone strikes –

there is little chance of, and even a taboo against, seeing the violence of terrorists as legitimate

(Alsultany 2012: 31). Despite the fact that major *Homeland* villain Abu Nazir was affected by

the killing of his son in an American drone strike, and Carrie discovers a "hibernation" in his

timeline during which he was grieving (S01E11), this does little to rehabilitate Abu Nazir or

justify his actions, as this was a lull following previous terrorist activity, for which the killing of

his son could not be part of the relevant context. Similarly, *24*'s Margot Al-Harazi is apparently

motivated by an American drone strike in Yemen which killed her husband and several children.

However, she and her husband had executed attacks together prior to this event, so while it may

provide context for her current initiative, it does not explain why she was an Al-Qaeda operative

before that (S09E03). On *Homeland,* we are given no explanation for Abu Nazir's actions,

beyond general references to religion; Carrie accuses him of abusing religion for his own

purposes and trapping generations in a cycle of endless violence: "You pervert the teachings of

the Prophet and call it a cause. You turn teenagers into suicide bombers" (S02E10). Nazir

affirms that "they" are prepared for generations of violence:

> Do you have the perseverance, the tenacity, the faith? Because we do. You can bomb us,
> starve us, occupy our holy places, but we will never lose our faith. We carry God in our
> hearts, our souls. To die is to join him. It may take a century, two centuries, three
> centuries, but we will exterminate you. (S02E10)

Even with this statement, it is not clear exactly whom Nazir wants to exterminate, or why,

though he mentions such things as "beach houses", "pension plans", and "organic foods"

(S02E10). This evokes a class dynamic of excessive American wealth and power disparity with

the rest of the world, read here by Nazir as the decadence and weakness of the West. Carrie's

rebuttal, delivered as a one-line joke, "Like I said, you're a terrorist", reinforces Abu Nazir as a reductionist, cartoonishly evil villain (S02E10). When describing the conversation, Carrie says: "He was surprisingly frank. He told me it would take centuries to defeat the *unbelievers*, and he didn't care how many casualties there would be. On either side, how many people died...it's of no concern" (S02E11; emphasis added). However, "unbelievers" is not a word used by Abu Nazir on the program. It is possible that Carrie's word choice is based on her expertise on Abu Nazir, or off-screen conversations, but it is important that he is never able to express in a way visible to the audience, what is his exact motivation and even whom he defines as his enemies, or why.

Similarly, in the other programs studied, villains rarely have, or at least are rarely given the opportunity to express, any kind of coherent motivation. Most villains have few revealed character details, little screen time, and little dialogue. They are mainly present as part of the entourage of a more central villain character, frequently as obstacles and cannon fodder for the heroes of the series, who unceremoniously and with impunity kill large numbers of villains. This includes minor characters who are counted among the 119 characters in this category, but also many more nameless "Brown"-skinned men who cannot be considered characters, and whose deaths are merely part of the action. We do not know who these individuals are or why they are motivated to support terrorist leaders. However, central Muslim villains also lack clear motivation for their actions. *Sleeper Cell*'s most important antagonist is Saad bin Safwan, a.k.a. Faris el-Farik, the leader of an Al-Qaeda sleeper cell planning an attack on Los Angeles. To gauge his motivation, we merely have vague references to "striking a blow against the great shaitan [Satan]", and "against all enemies of God" (S01E01). He emphasizes that they are "at war with America. Period", and that the conflict is not limited to fighting American military in the Middle East (S01E05).

General references are often made to American intervention in the Middle East, but this issue is rarely explored; in some cases, the programs repeatedly cut away from speeches given by the villains, to underline how irrelevant their motivation is seen to be, such as in the case of *24*'s Samir, whom we hear make general references to the "infidels of the West" (S08E16). *24*'s Omar is a bit more specific about American imperialism, but his accompanying emphasis on contrasting Americans as serving a "false God" with Muslims as "true believers and pure followers" (S04E06) takes away from his political grievances, as these issues of religious ideology are much less persuasive reasons to justify killing civilians, for both American audiences and American characters within the programs. Religion-based motivation is easily brushed off as irrational radicalism: recall Carrie's dismissive one-liner on *Homeland* to Abu Nazir's statement about religious motivation: "Like I said, you're a terrorist" (S02E10).

Furthermore, the methods of terrorists – most dramatically mass murder of civilians – also remove the possibility of ever taking their grievances seriously. In Omar's case, he captures the Secretary of Defense and his daughter, planning to publicly "put on trial" and execute the former, and is perfectly willing to murder the latter out of spite, even if this serves no strategic purpose (*24*, S04E06). The murdering of innocent people – and a woman, no less, evoking the need to protect our "vulnerable" populations, with notable priorities about protecting women and children, according to gendered narratives of security and protection – is not an action that would be undertaken by a reasonable person, whatever their grievance. Of course, there is a cognitive dissonance here according to which American narratives treat terrorism against the West as fundamentally evil and unjustifiable, but sanctions war against Middle Eastern countries, which produces large numbers of civilian casualties.

In other cases, it is implied that motivations for terrorism have more to do with issues in the individual's life: *Sleeper Cell*'s Tommy Emerson makes reference to wanting to "remove the infidels and their apostate collaborators from the Muslim nations" (S01E06), but it is elsewhere implied that his true motivation is to rebel against his mother, who is a feminist liberal arts professor at Berkeley (S01E10). Tommy is also described as a "loose cannon", easily prone to anger and violence (S01E05). Likewise, the sister of an individual involved in terrorism argues that the stated motive of fighting American interventionism is not the true goal: "This *jihad* is just an excuse to give in to anger. Ours is a religion of justice" (*The Grid*, ep. 3). *Sleeper Cell*'s Christian Aumont, a former White supremacist, is implied to have changed the focus but not the core motivation from his skinhead days, and in his own words to explain why he is to be part of a massive attack on civilians, simply states: "fuck you all", without clarifying to whom that refers, or why (S01E10). Some villains make vague references to religion and rewards they expect in paradise (e.g. *24*'s Syed Ali, S02E12), or this is simply implied by the trope of shouting of "Allahu Akbar" before they commit violent acts, such as suicide bombings (e.g. Nasir, *24*, S06E02). Others make passing references to sentiments such as the following: "Why are we on earth if not to fight the domination and suppression of our people through *jihad*?" (*The Grid*, ep. 1/2). *24*'s Syed Ali is an example of "cartoonish malevolence and simplistic zealotry" who reveals continuity as "part of a long line of two-dimensional Hollywood Oriental bad guys" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 148). His deviance is reinforced by his willingness to die for his "cause" and even his willingness to be tortured, as he asserts that more pain in this life will bring him "more pleasure in paradise" (S02E12; Morey & Yaqin 2011: 148). *The Grid*'s Yussef Nasseriah, or "Muhammad", is also a gross stereotype of the Islamic terrorist villain, not least in his remorseless use of children as suicide bombers (ep. 5/6). He is a Kuwaiti Al-Qaeda commander

who aims to attack the economy of the "infidel" by taking away their access to cheap oil; he argues that this will collapse the American economy and cause them to retreat from "their" lands (ep. 3); since the action of the program takes place in multiple countries including Egypt and Nigeria, the lands being referred to may include all "Muslim" countries. However, like with most of the villains, Nasseriah's plan and motives would benefit from greater detail.

Some characters refer to religion as having empowered them, such as Mina's assertion that Islam gives women dignity (*Sleeper Cell*, S02E03). Benito feels that his life is "finally gonna mean something", and that when he read the Qur'an, it was like a voice talking to him personally, that he was part of "God's legion on Earth", and "not just some gang-banger" (*Sleeper Cell,* S02E04). However, the fact that they feel empowered by Islam does not really explain their motivation for engaging in terrorism – beyond a simplistic and unfortunately common assumption that Islam is a *cause* of terrorism – except to perhaps imply that they would be easier targets for terrorist leaders wanting to manipulate their faith for nefarious purposes. For some of these characters who make vague references to religion to justify their actions, it is suggested that religion is not truly a factor, and they are instead merely opportunistic, ruthless, or pragmatic (e.g. *Homeland*'s Majid Javadi, S03E07). For still other characters, we simply have even more vague references to their "politics" (e.g. Sabir Ardakani, *24*, S04E19). As Alsultany suggests, the fact that terrorist actions "are never fully explained [leaves] open two opposed possibilities: we don't need a reason–isn't terrorism what Arabs and/or Muslims do, after all?–or any such rationale would be incomprehensible to Americans" (2012: 3). The latter is what *24's* Dina Araz, one of only twelve villains who are women of colour (10% of all villains), implies when she tells Jack that no one is innocent, and certainly not the casualties of the terror cell's actions. She affirms that she believes in her cause "as strongly as you believe in what you

believe. But I won't waste your time and mine trying to explain something you can never understand" (S04E09). Dina's husband Navi also references their "cause" for which many martyrs have died, but without ever specifying what exactly this cause entails (S04E10). Likewise, although Marwan Habib, a terror cell leader in the same season of *24,* is more specific than some villains about American imperialism and interventionism (S04E19), when protagonist Jack Bauer asks him what exactly he was trying to change, Marwan replies that he is not interested in having a political discussion (S0422). As such, *24* silences its villains regarding their political movitivations. Furthermore, regardless of his under-specified reasoning, his plan to cause nuclear meltdowns across the United States discredits anything he would have to say (S04E19).

Some characters do have more explicit motivations, such as *Sleeper Cell*'s Ilija Korjenic who is a Bosnian Muslim who lost his family in the Balkan war and himself survived a massacre by Serbs. Ilija affirms that he used to love America, but America did not come to the aid of the Bosnians (S01E01). However, the fact that these characters use violence against civilians undercuts, if not the validity of their grievance, then certainly their current endeavours. Even though Ilija is humanized in many ways, he is not rehabilitated as a character: he continues to be involved in terrorist activities and murders his beloved girlfriend to "tie up loose ends" and reduce his risk of detection (S02E03). Despite detailed back stories such as those on *Sleeper Cell*, "grievances are ultimately framed as illegitimate. The complexities of history and religion are eventually boiled down to Arab/Muslim individuals spewing nonsensical, hateful rhetoric at the United States or Israel" (Alsultany 2012: 30).

In sum, while it is not the only mode of performing "Muslim-ness", "Muslim-ness" as villainy remains predominant. The motives of "terrorists" are rarely explained and never

justified. Villains may come from a variety of backgrounds and have any appearance – including the particularly insidious blonde, American-born "enemy within" – but what they all have in common in their Muslim-ness. Nevertheless, old tropes die hard, and this category remains heavily gendered and racialized, with men of "Middle Eastern" origin representing a majority – 91 of 119, or 77% – of cases.

The Enemy Within: The Terrorists Next Door and White Convert Terrorists

Programs portraying Muslims often prey on the fear of the Muslim terrorist as the "enemy within". The enemy within includes the immigrant family that lives next door and, even more sinister because of their "invisibility", White convert terrorists. Unless they are visibly Muslim, such as through wearing the *hijab* or donning other markers of Muslim-ness, White Muslims avoid racial profiling.

One type of "enemy within" is what Shaheen identified as the new threatening stereotype of terrorists infiltrating American society in the guise of Arab-American neighbours (2008: 47). Muslims might be lying in wait as part of "sleeper cells", living apparently "normal" and unsuspicious lives, but may at any moment spring into action. An example of this is the Araz family (*24*, S04). Although on the surface they seem like a normal family, Navi, Dina, and teenage son Behrooz are actually terrorists, and have been living in the United States for years in preparation for the current day's attacks. The danger that this family poses is an implicit rebuttal to ethical concerns of racial profiling as it reminds us that the Muslim family next door *could* actually be terrorists. The Counter Terrorist Unit acknowledges that the Araz family "slipped under the radar" because they had acquired American citizenship and were not on any watch lists (S04E09). This is a reminder of the perceived fact that surveillance of Muslims – even Muslim-Americans – is in the best interests of national security, and suggests that extending citizenship

to Muslims is essentially dangerous. As discussed earlier, an assumption of this research is that popular culture both reflects and influences "real" societal and political dynamics; for a contemporary parallel, one need look no further than Trump's claims during the American election primaries in 2015 that he would ban Muslims from entering the US (e.g. Berman 2015) and his swift enactment of such a policy following his inauguration (Scott 2017).

The juxtaposition of radicalism and normal family life makes the Araz family seem particularly sinister, as they discuss their nefarious plans over a family breakfast (S04E01). The trope of the terrorist family also preys on the gendered fear of protecting White families, especially young women, and fears of miscegenation on the grounds of safety concerns. For instance, Behrooz has a White American girlfriend, Debbie, and his parents fear that she has accidentally learned something that could compromise their mission: Behrooz's mother tries to force him to kill Debbie but, suspecting that he would try to save her instead, poisons Debbie herself (S04E04). Thus, an implication of this situation is that Debbie would have survived if only her parents had forbidden her from dating Behrooz, instead of accepting him. However, the United States also appears as an antidote to Muslim backwardness, as Behrooz's father Navi assumes that the reason Behrooz has become interested in an American girl and did not have the nerve to kill her is because he has been "changed" by living in the United States (S04E06). The parental failure in this Muslim family is also revealed by their apparent inability to teach children the difference between right and wrong – even that murder is wrong – as seventeen-year-old Behrooz declares: "I didn't understand until today what it would feel like doing these things. They're wrong, Mom, and I see it now" (S04E07). However, this failure to teach basic morality is not surprising as Navi does not hesitate to murder his brother-in-law, and tries to murder his own son (S04E09). Alsultany argues that presenting terrorists in family contexts serves to

humanize them (2012: 22-6). On the contrary, I argue that portraying Muslim villains in family contexts underscores their villainy by portraying an unconscionable willingness to endanger both the lives and souls of their spouses and children by implicating them in terrorism. Furthermore, although showing Muslims as embedded in family life can be considered as humanizing them, such portrayals of families are few and far between and nested within a broader context of dehumanizing performances of Muslims that show them as ruthless and lacking compassion and regard for human life. For example, while teenage son Behrooz is portrayed sympathetically as a victim of his parents – and perhaps more broadly as a victim of his religion and culture – the family context highlights his father's villainy as not only is he using his wife and son to plan and carry out terrorist attacks, but he is also willing to murder them (S04E07). This further feeds into orientalist stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims that presume a disregard for the sanctity of life and abusive patriarchal relations within families and societies.

Another example of the "terrorist next door" is Ahmed (*24*, S06). Ahmed is the neighbour and best friend of White teenager Scott. When Ahmed's father is arrested on suspicion of terrorism, bigoted residents of the neighbourhood harass Ahmed and tell him to leave; Scott's father defends and protects Ahmed, saying that Ahmed's father was only arrested because people are scared, and asserts that: "He's no more a terrorist than you or me" (S06E01). Later, one of these bigots – Stan – returns and viciously beats Ahmed, prompting Ahmed to kill him in self-defence (S06E02). Unfortunately, although Ahmed's father is innocent, Ahmed is, in fact, a terrorist, which makes it difficult to feel sympathy for him. This also vindicates the violent bigot, as he is proven to be right about Ahmed – even though this is probably a coincidence, and he may have behaved similarly to someone who was actually innocent. Ahmed also reveals that he only pretended to befriend Scott and his family, and that he hates them and their inability to

correctly pronounce his name (S06E02). Scott's father notes, in horror: "My God, Stan was right. You are a terrorist" (S06E02). This incident suggests that we should not so easily dismiss "bigots", because sometimes the Muslim neighbour *is* a terrorist. Scott's family will presumably be more cautious about befriending Muslim neighbours in the future.

The fear of Muslim sleeper cells is pushed furthest in the aptly-named *Sleeper Cell*. Cell members include Bobby Habib, another "terrorist next door", who is very friendly and appears to be a good father, but who uses his six-year-old daughter's birthday party as a cover for terrorists to meet (S01E01). Bobby lives next door to Gayle and her young son Marcus; this chance connection ultimately leads to Gayle's murder, as the birthday party (S01E01) is where she meets protagonist and undercover FBI agent Darwyn, who becomes her boyfriend. She is eventually murdered by a terror cell member who learns that Darwyn had betrayed them (S02E07). Bosnian cell member Ilija, meanwhile, is a substitute math teacher (S01E02); this also evokes fears that allowing Muslims into schools could be exposing vulnerable and impressionable youths to terrorists. These programs also justify racial profiling in professional capacities, especially in cases where individuals of Muslim and/or Middle Eastern background will have access to sensitive information. For example, *Sleeper Cell* cell leader Faris El-Farik works for a security company, and also passes as Jewish to avoid suspicion (S01E01-E02).[11] Similarly, one terrorist cell leader on *24*, Marwan Habib, works for a company that made an override device that the terrorists steal to melt down nuclear reactors (S04E12). An implicit suggestion here is that it is not racist to place additional security measures on Arabs and Muslims – or at least that such discrimination is justified in the name of security.

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[11] Farik notes that people cannot tell Arabs and Jews apart, which permits him to pose as a Sephardic Jew. This can be read as a wink to the audience who may be aware that actor Oded Fehr is, in fact, an Israeli actor who frequently plays Arab characters. However, this is also a troubling statement as it presents the racial profiling of Arab Jews (along with Arab Christians and anyone else who may be "Arab-looking") as a justifiable security measure.

The other type of "enemy within" is the convert terrorist. As *Sleeper Cell*'s Tommy Emerson notes, because he is White with blonde hair and blue eyes, he is the "perfect weapon" and is ideally suited to going undercover to prepare for and carry out attacks, because he seems harmless: "just another American idiot cruising the mall" (S01E02). Tommy also reflects the fear that "good American boys" will be corrupted by Islam and Islamist ideology. Although White converts to Islam are typically portrayed in more complex ways than the "Middle Eastern" villains discussed above, "going Muslim", like "going native", signifies "a regression or the loss of a civilized state of being; a transformation from civilized to barbaric" and a "descent away from Americanness" (Alsultany 2012: 110). Related to the orientalizing, feminizing, and claims of sexual deviance of "Middle Eastern" Muslims, conversion to Islam also represents a "'deviance' from normative (white, middle class) masculinity" (Alsultany 2012: 110). According to this deviance, it is perceived as abnormal for young men to be interested in religion instead of girls, and is related to allegations of homosexuality (Alsultany 2012: 111). There are also real-life examples of this narrative, such as in the case of John Walker Lindh, a White American who became interested in Islam in his youth and eventually became a soldier for Al-Qaeda (Alsultany 2012: 109). He lost his privilege as a White male and his right to sympathy when he "went Muslim" and became a "failed heterosexual", in support of the narrative of terrorism as motivated by both religious and sexual deviance (Alsultany 2012: 120). In Lindh's case, his excessively "tolerant", "liberal", and lax upbringing are also blamed for his trajectory, and illustrative of the dangers of "liberal education" (Alsultany 2012: 120). Similarly, much is made of the impact on *Sleeper Cell*'s Tommy of his mother being a feminist liberal arts professor and Tommy's resentment at feeling that she undermined her husband's masculinity.

Lilyhammer's Jan is another White convert to Islam who is most strongly characterized by his relationship to women. Jan is a dislikeable character who desperately seeks approval, but is easily frustrated when he experiences rejection, and in several instances is violent towards women with whom he is intimate, even murdering one (S02E06) and attempting to kill another (S03E07). When Jan flees to Iraq (S02E07) and comes back having converted to Islam, it would seem that there is little substantive change to his character – just a new veneer through which he can complain about mistreatment and neglect, even as opportunities continue to be offered to him, despite the questionable behaviour that led to his circumstances, such as sexual misconduct in a professional capacity. In behaviour that more closely evokes the trope of the maladjusted White (usually American) male who is spurred by a sense of rejection for which he blames society and women in particular, Jan plans a suicide bombing at a government office (S03E06). While his motives are quite consistent with Jan's character pre-conversion to Islam, the way in which he lashes out emulates the expectations of Islamic terrorists – an explosives vest strapped to his torso; a civilian/government target; and a pre-recorded video citing his reasons for his acts (S03E05-06). Jan's intended suicide bombing is pre-empted by bumping into an old (female) colleague who offers him a job – the opportunity and validation he craved – and he quickly drops his new persona of convert to Islam, confirming that this was a superficial façade all along. Jan is technically a (would-be) terrorist as he nearly blows up a government office in a suicide bombing, but he is not motivated by any kind of religious ideology, which distinguishes him from most of the other characters in this group. However, distinctions between him and others remain blurred as other Muslim terrorists, such as Tommy on *Sleeper Cell,* are also suggested to be driven more by toxic masculinity than religious ideology.

The Grid's Kaz Moore, a Chechen-American Muslim, after having been involved in terrorist operations abroad, is chosen to lead an attack on the United States because of his ability to "blend in", thanks to his Caucasian appearance and the fact the he was raised in the US (ep. 3). Although a Muslim by birth and not a convert, Kaz's inoffensive and attractive Whiteness makes it easy for him to cross borders, even when transporting weapons materials (ep. 4). Kaz's Whiteness also makes it possible for him to mislead and receive help from White supremacists about his intentions; a friend he duped is initially skeptical and eventually horrified to learn that the word "Caucasian" refers to the Caucasus, and that many Chechens like Kaz are "blond, blue-eyed, and Muslim", and that Kaz plans to kill Americans (ep. 5/6). Kaz is motivated by Russian violence against his people and particularly the death of his mother, as well as the perception that his father betrayed and abandoned his mother in Chechnya (ep. 5/6). He criticizes his father for his money, his cars, and his "American whores", and feels that in assimilating too much to American life and society, his father has abandoned their country and their faith (ep. 5/6). However, as in most cases of Muslim terrorists like those discussed above, the translation of these grievances into willingness to carry out a mass-murder of civilians through a gas attack (ep. 5/6) still seems rather under-explained and unjustifiable. Additionally, like *Sleeper Cell*'s Tommy, rebelling against his father also appears to be tied up with Kaz's political motivations. Because of Kaz's insistence on his hatred for America, and for his father for embracing American-ness, it is implied that "hating" America provides most of the necessary context for explaining terrorism. A standard feature in the performance of Muslim-ness as terrorism is the missing link according to which "hating America" translates into mass murder of civilians.

White female converts are perceived with confusion as to why they would "go Muslim", such as in the case of Aileen on *Homeland*. Aileen's involvement in terrorism also somewhat

flips the gender script, as Muslim women are most often portrayed as victims of their misogynist and terrorist husbands, but while Aileen is involved in terrorism with her boyfriend Raqim Faisal, *she* is the driving force behind their involvement with Al-Qaeda, and apologizes for "dragging" him into it (S01E06). Faisal is the more reluctant terrorist, and wants them to turn themselves over to the authorities, but is killed (S01E06). Nevertheless, Aileen's narrative preys on the fear that "good" American girls will go "bad" if allowed to fraternize with Muslim men: she met Faisal when her family was living in Saudi Arabia from the ages of eight to thirteen (read: youth are vulnerable and corruptible), and later travelled extensively in the Middle East, including reuniting with Faisal in Saudi Arabia (S01E06). What is different about Aileen's treatment as a terrorist – a White woman rather than "Middle Eastern" man – is that her involvement with terrorism is considered surprising. Careful attention is paid to understanding how this came about: "*She's* the terrorist?!"; "somehow she made the journey from Connecticut schoolgirl to terrorist girlfriend, involved in a plot against America. How? Why?" (S01E06). Although her motives are not very clearly explained, the show's protagonists are actually interested in learning about them. She does refer to racial and class tensions, as well as vague references to US foreign policy, noting that she wanted to "give the US the 'Fuck You' it deserves", and that her parents would be most appalled by her shacking up with a *poor*, *brown* Saudi (S01E07). Aileen ultimately commits suicide in prison (S02E07).

There are many parallels between *Homeland*'s Aileen Morgan and *24*'s Marie Warner. Like Aileen, Marie is a young blonde woman from a wealthy White family, and her fiancé is a Middle Eastern Muslim man. Like on *Homeland* where Faisal seems more likely to be the only or primary terrorist, *24* plays on the misdirection of implying that Marie's fiancé Reza Naiyeer is involved in terrorism, but then features the dramatic twist of seeing Marie, the real terrorist,

shoot and kill him, revealing that Reza was innocent all along (S02E10). Like Aileen, Marie had lived in Saudi Arabia with her family when she was young, which also implicitly imputes responsibility to Saudi Arabia's cultural and religious context. Reflecting the use of the phrase "Allahu Akbar" in the spectacle of Muslim-ness as villainy, Marie's utterance of this phrase indicates that she has converted to Islam as part of her radicalization (S02E13). Like Aileen, Marie affirms that she is motivated by the hypocrisy of the United States and the suffering that the US causes around the world (S02E14). Additionally, like other White terrorists discussed in this chapter, such as *Homeland*'s Aileen, *Sleeper Cell*'s Tommy, and *The Grid*'s Kaz, Marie is also partly motivated by rebellion against a parent: that her father works for the CIA and contributes to American-led suffering (S02E14). It is interesting to note that it is uniquely among White, American characters that rebellion against one's parents is a recurring theme. Mina, discussed below, also blames her Western, liberal family for leading her into a life of debauchery and sin, from which she was only saved by Islam. This theme of youthful rebellion infantilizes these characters and undermines their social and political motivations.

Sleeper Cell's Mina is a White, Dutch terrorist who feels that Islam "saved" her and that it gives women dignity: although she was once a prostitute, she married a Muslim man who taught her about Islam and explosives before he died a "martyr's death" fighting Americans in Iraq (S02E01). She does not wear a *hijab* so that she can blend in and serve the larger mission, but she would otherwise wear a veil (S02E05). When Darwyn (protagonist and undercover FBI agent) asks "since when do we involve women in our operation?", Mina reminds him that Islam's first martyr was a woman who was killed for refusing to worship false idols (S02E01). Mina says that she grew up in a liberal family that did not impose any rules on her, but she eventually realized she was actually a slave to the "freedom" of the West (S02E03). However,

Mina's argument that Islam brings women dignity is undermined by the fact that she is a terrorist who gets close to Darwyn's girlfriend Gayle in order to spy on and eventually murder her, and then over 500 others in a suicide bombing (S02E07-08). In addition to the extremism expressed through her actions, Mina also expresses extreme views such as supporting stoning as an acceptable punishment for breaking marriage vows (S02E04). Unlike most male and "Middle Eastern" villains, Mina is given the opportunity to express her views on religion and her motives for engaging in terrorism; however, this does not make her behaviour appear any more rational or justified. She reveals that in an operation in which she and her husband intended to die as martyrs, Mina survived, but miscarried (S02E07). This miscarriage does not provide a coherent or persuasive motive for her behaviour as the pregnancy would have been equally terminated if she had succeeded in martyring herself and dying at the same time as her husband. *Sleeper Cell* also cultivates sympathy for Mina when she is raped by her employer (S02E05) but feels that she has no recourse or option to defend herself, because she cannot bring any attention to herself and risk jeopardizing her "mission". As with the miscarriage, because Mina is already involved in terrorism by this point, Mina's rape cannot help to explain her "radicalization", but it does show her singular focus on her mission, as anything that happens to her is secondary to her "cause". Before she murders Darwyn's girlfriend Gayle, Gayle criticizes Mina for her hypocrisy and for her twisted interpretation of Islam, showing her own knowledge of historical Muslim women and telling Mina that she's "nothing like those women in the books. They were heroes. You're just a psychotic bitch with a death wish" (S02E07). Thus, *Sleeper Cell* also reminds the viewer that it is not trying to imply that all Muslims are villains, despite the fact that the majority of the Muslims it portrays are terrorists. In sum, although Mina is afforded some opportunities to garner

sympathy and is able to express her beliefs more than most villains, she remains irredeemably "Other" due to her belief in a strict interpretation of Islam and her murderous actions.

24's Margot Al-Harazi and her children Simone and Ian are other examples of terrorists who are White converts to Islam. Like Marie Warner on *24*, Aileen Morgan on *Homeland*, and Mina on *Sleeper Cell*, Margot's terrorism followed romantic involvement with a Muslim man: she is described as having been "radicalized" after marrying an Al-Qaeda commander, who became stepfather to her children from an earlier marriage. Simone's Whiteness helps her go undercover and seduce a man from whom she needs to steal weapons technology (S09E02). In a twist similar to the second season of *24* when Reza was not involved in terrorism but his White fiancée was, Simone's Middle-Eastern husband Naveed is the member of the family experiencing cold feet and least willing to carry out the attack (S09E03-04). Margot is ruthless: she cuts off her daughter's finger to coerce her son-in-law Naveed into piloting drones so they can carry out their operation (S09E04) and later kills him (S09E05). She even attempts to kill Simone for violating her orders to kill Naveed's sister and his niece, who is a child (S02E07). Margot also pulls a gun on her son to prevent him from escaping rather than being caught and killed by the show's protagonist, reminding him that her husband – his stepfather – "was prepared to die for what he believed in, and so should we" (S09E09). Margot claims to be motivated by a drone strike that killed children (S09E05), but since it is established that she had previously carried out terrorist attacks with her husband, the motivation of this specific drone strike does not justify her earlier choice to become a terrorist. However, Margot is interesting as an "honourable" terrorist: when her target, the current President, offers to give himself up in exchange for her to not commit further violence, she follows through in getting rid of their drones, saying that "Heller kept his word; so must we" (S09E09). Of course, she suspends this

operation of disposing of the drones when she realizes that she was duped, but is stopped from committing further violence by the show's protagonist (S09E09).

In sum, the figure of the White Muslim terrorist highlights the fact that the threat of terrorism comes not only from abroad, but also from within. They imply an anti-miscegenation ethos and Western patriarchal need to protect "our" women from the "dangerous" Muslim man. It is telling that 71% (5 of 7) of White Muslim women are terrorists, while only 21% (12 of 58) of "Middle-Eastern" Muslim women are terrorists. Reminding us of the importance of intersectionality, "Middle-Eastern" women are more often passive victims, whereas White Muslim women not only show more agency, but all seven White women featured are major or significant recurring characters, whereas many of "Middle-Eastern" Muslim women are minor characters. It is also important to note that all of the White women terrorists discussed are or were romantically involved with Muslim men. Meanwhile, White male terrorists such as Kaz (*The Grid*) and Tommy (*Sleeper Cell*) have no significant romantic relationships of which we are aware, and although French terrorist and former neo-Nazi Christian is married to a Muslim woman, she is not involved in terrorism and, indeed, has left him because he has become a bad man (S01E09). Among terrorists of "Middle Eastern" origin, women are also portrayed as having terrorist husbands (e.g. Dina Araz on *24*), whereas among Middle Eastern men, their relationship status is usually either unstated as if to imply that it does not matter or, when they are married, the wives of terrorists are variously ignorant of, supportive of, or opposed to their husbands' involvement in terrorism. The racialized "enemy" also hides among "us" as the Muslim family next door. While Alsultany (2012) notes that a recurring theme of post-2001 television is to sympathetically portray Arabs and Muslims as victims of Western discrimination,

such sympathetic portrayals are undermined by the many instances in which the Muslims next door *are* indeed terrorists.

The "Reformed" or "Former" Terrorist

The "Reformed" or "Former" terrorist occupies a liminal space between negative and positive portrayals of Muslims. Viewers may be quite sympathetic to "reformed" or former terrorists; this distinguishes them from most "bad guys" who are nearly exclusively characterized by villainy. Reformed/Former terrorists are importantly distinguished from their counterparts by virtue of being vastly more complex characters with more developed back stories.

Even when Muslims work alongside protagonists, their "Muslim-ness" and previous associations with terrorism remain an underlying source of suspicion. On *Homeland*, "Muslim-ness" implies that trustworthiness and loyalty are always in question. This is especially true for the most prominent Muslim character on the show, Sergeant Nicholas Brody. When Brody is rescued by American forces after having been captured and presumed dead for eight years, CIA agent Carrie Mathison immediately suspects that he may be working with Al-Qaeda leader Abu Nazir, the "most dangerous terrorist in the world" (S01E02), as she had previously received intelligence that an American prisoner of war had been "turned" (S01E01). The first "big reveal" – supported by dramatic music building suspense to the climax of the second episode – shows Brody performing ablutions and praying facing the rising sun in his garage; the fact that he is a practising Muslim is framed as very damning evidence against him (S01E02). The tension and significance of the scene is conveyed by the music: it is rare to find such suspenseful and dramatic music to accompany such mundane tasks as sweeping the floor, washing one's hands and laying down a carpet; this is only possible because the implication is the anticipation that Brody is going to pray, and thus confirm that Brody is Muslim, which also implies that he is the

prisoner that was "turned".[12] Brody's wife Jessica is hysterical when she learns he is a Muslim: "I don't understand. [Picking up his Qur'an.] These are the people who tortured you. These are the people who, if they found out Dana [their daughter] and Xander were having sex, they would stone her to death in a soccer stadium" (S02E01). Thus, Jessica illustrates that she associates Islam with extreme views and violence. She is furious, uncomprehending, and shows no respect for Brody's religious choice, throwing his Qur'an on the ground and saying: "I thought you put this *crazy* stuff behind you. ... this can't happen" (S02E01). She immediately draws sinister (albeit accurate) links to the accusations Carrie had previously made about his involvement in a terror plot, "remembering all of a sudden" the implications which she had never stopped to dwell upon without the context of Brody's Muslim-ness. Brody's conversion to Islam seems absurd and crazy to his family, and is problematic for Brody's role as an American, as a Marine, as a politician, and as a husband and father. Brody reveals to protagonist CIA agent Carrie that he did turn to religion to help him cope with captivity, but insists that he is not a terrorist (S01E07).

The portrayal of a White convert to Islam who is not a terrorist would indeed present powerful resistance to negative performances of Muslim-ness. However, Brody *is* working for Abu Nazir's Al-Qaeda cell and wears an explosives vest in order to assassinate the Vice-President, the head of the CIA, and other high-ranking American officials (S01E12). Even after

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[12] It is important to note that sound and music also play an important role in soliciting emotional responses from the audience and reinforcing performances of Muslim-ness (along with dialogue, costuming, character behaviour, and so on). Although it remains understudied in the discipline, there have been some moves to take sound and music seriously in IR, such as in the work of Attali (1985), Pasler (2008), the edited volume by Franklin (2005), and elsewhere in the sub-field of Popular Culture and World Politics (e.g. Davies and Franklin 2015). As Franklin (2005: 6) has argued, politics, music, and culture interact as dynamic processes that are an integral part of everyday life. For example, music can be an important "site of political and countercultural contestations, [and] moral aesthetic positionings" (Franklin 2005: 5). As in this example of Brody on *Homeland*, dramatic music that helps to frame a character and their actions as sinister adds an important element to this characterization and promotes a negative perception of the character. This dynamic is aptly satirized by Aziz Ansari who argues that Islamophobia is due in large part to the use of sinister music when Arabs and Muslims are portrayed in pop culture: "People are scared. Why? Because any time they watch movies and TV shows and a character's Arabic or they're praying or something like that, that scary-ass music from *Homeland* is underneath it. It's terrifying! ... You want to end Islamophobia, honestly, just change that music" (2017).

he ultimately does not detonate the bomb, first due to technical problems, and then changing his mind after a phone call from his daughter (S01E12), Brody continues to work for Abu Nazir as an insider to the American political apparatus, despite his assertion that he is "not a terrorist" (S02E01). With the initial delay caused due to technical failure, Brody's legitimacy is further undercut by his incompetence as a terrorist. Carrie, with whom Brody is now also involved in a complicated romantic relationship, finally gathers enough evidence to get Brody to confess and become a double-agent for the CIA. She believes that Brody can be trusted, but her superior, Saul Berenson, opines that Brody is "a man who put on a suicide vest. That's who he is, that's who he'll always be", and that Carrie's relationship with him is having "a terrorist in [her] bed" (S02E12). Because Brody has converted and switched sides before, he is seen as unreliable: "This is a guy who changes his mind" (S03E11). Although Brody does risk his life to pursue the mission with which the CIA tasked him, he continues to be seen as untrustworthy and unreliable (S03E11). Even after Brody completes his mission, the CIA sacrifices him as he is seen as a toxic asset due to his infamy as the (false) culprit for a bombing at the Langley CIA headquarters that killed 219 people, mostly CIA, and because, given his past, he could never truly be trusted (S03E12). Even when the CIA receives intelligence that Brody was not *the* Langley bomber (S03E07), it is impossible to fully confirm that he had no part in helping to facilitate it.

Another example of the "reformed" terrorist is Hamri Al-Assad on *24*. Assad is believed to responsible for a recent string of attacks on American cities and is described as someone who "has been calling for the destruction of the US for the last 20 years" (S06E01). However, it is quickly revealed that Assad is in fact there to stop Abu Fayed, the man truly responsible for these attacks; Assad claims to have realized that violent tactics are ineffective, and is instead seeking to negotiate (S06E01). Other than the fact that Assad's methods have changed, his motivation –

for either violence or non-violent negotiation – remains unclear. The protagonists are skeptical of his apparent change of heart, and his motives remain constantly in question: "This is inconsistent with twenty years of terrorism on Assad's part. His organization has waged nonstop war against the West. He's responsible for hundreds of deaths" (S06E02). As elsewhere, the precise reasoning and specific targets and methods involved in waging "war" against "the West" remain ambiguous. However, as Assad consistently provides assistance to Jack Bauer and the Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU), the protagonists begin to trust that he is trying to stop the violence being wrought against the US, especially as his reputation means that he could, in fact, wield a significant influence: "I've gotten most of my people and the governments that support us to agree to a ceasefire with the West" (S06E02). Furthermore, the narrative of fighting or having a ceasefire with the unspecified "West" reinforces the clash of civilizations narrative promoted by Huntington (1993). Although Assad's alleged influence is problematic in that it reinforces the notion that Middle Eastern governments *do* harbour and support terrorist groups, his characterization is increasingly sympathetic, although there are those who still refuse to trust him. Assad's violent past is condemned: we are reminded that he has, for many years, been involved in a "manipulation" to make people believe that his cause was "a holy one" (S06E09). However, his character arc is largely one of a former villain who has been rehabilitated. His plot culminates in his death in an attempt on the American President's life (S06E11). Assad's heroic attempt to save the President from the bomb appears to confirm his change of heart and that he really has renounced terrorism. Nevertheless, because Assad's Muslim-ness marks him as essentially "other" and threatening, and because of his previous actions, many American officials persist in believing that Assad was behind the many attacks on the United States, including this attempt on the President's life (S06E12).

While characters such as Brody and Assad can be taken as examples of Muslims who work alongside the American protagonists and help them fight terrorist organizations, the fact that they are former terrorists limits the extent to which they can be seen as sympathetic characters. Most other characters mistrust them, and this cannot be construed as mere Islamophobia, as the characters *do* have a history of conducting and supporting terrorism. As with their "Good Muslim" counterparts (see chapter five), no matter how staunchly they fight to protect "America" or to build peace, their loyalty will forever remain in question, and they can never fully transition to being considered trustworthy.

Conclusion

Portrayals of Muslim villains are limited and reductionist. They perform a spectacle of Muslim-ness as appalling but exciting villainy. Like Barthes' wrestler, the Muslim terrorist may disgust but not disappoint: counter-terror programs are full of the tropes of Muslim villains as wealthy, misogynist, and homophobic religious fanatics. Various short-hands regularly reinforce this imaginary of the Muslim terrorist, such as the use of phrases like "*Allahu akbar*"; juxtapositions of scenes of Muslim religious life and scenes of terrorism; and casting and costuming decisions according to racialized expectations. Even when such expectations are challenged, such as in the inclusion of White Muslim terrorists, this does little to challenge performances of Muslim-ness as villainy, but instead preys on the fear that the threat of Islamic terror comes not only from without, but also from within. Muslim villains are rarely given the opportunity to explain their motives, and when they do, they are frequently incoherent and undermined by the unquestionable evil of their methods. Because political and moral questioning of the American government, foreign and domestic policy, and behaviour of counter-terror

agencies comes only from the mouths of irrational zealots, these critiques cannot be taken seriously.

The very existence of Islamic terrorists, along with their grievances about American imperialism and foreign interventionism serve to reinforce the legitimacy of American behaviour by contrast, giving the United States no choice but to defend itself against the barbarians at their gates, as well as those who are already inside. By drawing on a long history of orientalist and colonial dehumanizing of the Muslim Other, portrayals of Muslim-ness as backward, misogynistic, and violent help to weave a parallel narrative about progressive Western (American) civilization. The ubiquity of Muslim terrorists in popular culture also has serious consequences for American domestic and foreign policy that targets Muslims in the name of "security", including foreign intervention in Muslim-majority countries; internal detention and surveillance of Muslim-Americans, including through the PATRIOT Act; and, most recently, the executive order proposed by Trump that aims to ban the immigration and travel of individuals from several Muslim-majority countries, as well as halt the arrival of Syrian refugees (Allen et al. 2017).

Apparent attempts to challenge stereotypes about Muslim villains often reinforce them: Portraying Muslim terrorists of multiple backgrounds may help to challenge the conflation of Arab-ness and Muslim-ness, but the bottom line is that although not all Muslims are from the Middle East, all Muslims *can* be terrorists. Hence, "Muslim-ness" is taken as the essentialized characteristic that makes the racialization of Muslim-ness possible. As discussed elsewhere, this research studies the construction of a racialized aggregate based on "Muslim-ness" because despite the varied backgrounds of Muslims portrayed in television programs – and most of these are vaguely "Middle Eastern" with little attention paid to distinctions of national or even ethnic

origin – all Muslims are regarded as potentially dangerous, and Muslim villains are portrayed as ruthless and irrational. Rather than humanizing terrorists, presenting them in family situations only reinforces narratives about a disregard for the sanctity of life. Even when former terrorists renounce their ways, their Muslim-ness and former involvement in terrorism forever marks them as "Other" and they can never be fully rehabilitated. However, the Muslim terrorist/villain is not the only mode of performing Muslim-ness in American television programs. The Muslim terrorist/villain's "good" counterpart will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE LOYALTY PARADOX: THE "GOOD" MUSLIM

Introduction

This chapter discusses the "good" Muslim counterpart of the Muslim villain discussed in the previous chapter. The colloquial term "good guys" is nearly as apt as that of "bad guys" for Muslim villains as this mode of performance is also overwhelmingly male. Of 35 individuals in this category, 31 (89%) are male and 29 (83%) are "Middle-Eastern" men. Interestingly, this group is exclusively composed of people of colour, which can be contrasted with 11 (of 119) villains who are White converts in the villains category. Characters in this group also almost exclusively identify as Muslim-American, and the "Good" Muslim is usually a counter-terror agent. The performance of the trope of the "Good" Muslim is summarized in the following table:

	"Middle Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Total: 35	29	4	0	0	2	0
% of total	83%	11%	0%	0%	6%	0%

The Loyalty Paradox: The "Good" Muslim

Dramas that perform Muslim-ness such as *Homeland, Sleeper Cell, The Grid,* and *24* do present a counterpart to the untrustworthy Muslim trope, but the "good Muslim" stereotype is just as one-dimensional and reductionist, despite the "positive" portrayal. The Good Muslim is trapped in a loyalty paradox, according to which patriotism and loyalty to "America" is their primary character trait, and yet they remain vulnerable to suspicion because their Muslim-ness marks them as untrustworthy and as potential traitors. Within a framework that sees racial profiling of Muslims as necessary to protecting national security, the Good Muslim is expected to bear violations of their rights in view of the "greater good'" and as required by their unquestioning patriotism. The Good Muslim also acts as a mouthpiece to educate other

characters (and the viewer) about non-violent and non-oppressive interpretations of Islam, and to ostensibly bring "balance" to a program's portrayal of Muslims. However, the "Good" Muslim's performance of a less-threatening Muslim-ness does little to upset the more predominant narratives of Muslim-ness as producing terrorist subjects. In fact, the Good Muslim can just as easily serve to reinforce the villainy of other Muslims by contrast, and sometimes appears as tokenistic lip-service to more "politically correct" storytelling.

As literature on positive and negative stereotypes of Native Americans in popular culture has argued, positive stereotypes are just as dehumanizing as negative stereotypes because they reduce a group of people to a presumed and limited set of characteristics, rather than portraying them as complex and nuanced individuals (Bird 1999). Morey and Yaqin suggest that "Good" Muslims are "well-meaning reversals" of the villain trope, but that stereotypes persist (2011: 143); they are skeptical of claims of these representations as "positive" (2011: 206). We must also keep in mind that thinking about "positive" as opposed to "negative" portrayals is superficial and does not address the complexities of representations of Muslim-ness (Alsultany 2012: 13). Yet, the Good/Bad representation binary is overpowering in perceptions and analysis (Alsultany 2012: 28). Alsultany argues that the insertion of patriotic Arab and Muslim Americans is a representation strategy that helps these programs appear to challenge stereotypes, while these programs continue to "promote logics that legitimize racist policies and practices" (2012: 21). For instance, while *Sleeper Cell*, through the main character Darwyn Al-Sayeed, uses the strategy of suggesting that Islam can inspire American patriotism and not just terrorism (Alsultany 2012: 22), the harsh logics of the "War on Terror" are still shown to be necessary to prevent the attacks of those who *do* use Islam to justify mass murder of civilians. The inclusion of "good" Muslims as a disclaimer to show that the program wishes to imply that not *all*

Muslims (Alsultany 2012: 74) are villains or brutes does little to disrupt the broader "negative" narratives about Muslim-ness. Furthermore, Alsultany argues that as "overt propaganda"

> has become less effective and more controversial, the production and circulation of 'positive' representations of the 'enemy' has become essential to projecting the United States as benevolent, especially in its declaration of war and passage of racist policies. TV dramas have become essential, though often unwitting, collaborators in the forming of a new postrace racism. (2012: 7)

As such, we should be mindful of what role such representations play in the larger fabric of the politics of the "War on Terror". "Positive" portrayals imply that the program's protagonists, who usually combat terrorism within government agencies, are not racist because they also interact with and work alongside "good" Muslims; this also promotes such perceptions of real government actors and help to justify foreign and domestic policy in the "real" world, whether the producers of these pop culture artefacts intend to do so or not. For example, it would be difficult to claim that the prevalence of reductionist stereotypes about Muslims plays no role in popular support for immigration policies that target individuals from Muslim-majority countries, such as in Trump's so-called "Muslim ban" (Scott 2017).

 As Alsultany found, since 9/11, there has been a surprising "abundance of sympathetic portrayals of Arabs and Muslims on U.S. television" (2012: 1-2); it should be noted that many of the cases Alsultany discusses are programs that feature Muslims as guest characters of the week, along with more sustained portrayals. Of this study's corpus of 288 performances of Muslim-ness, 129 or 45% are arguably sympathetic portrayals (the combined total of "Good" Muslims, Friendly Cultural Stereotypes, Victims, and Positive – Miscellaneous characters), and only 28, or 10%, are "positive" portrayals that transcend stereotypes. Morey and Yaqin find that in post-9/11

dramas, the "obligatory good Muslim" primarily explains elements of Muslim history and culture to Western viewers (2011: 157). They are merely "mouthpieces", whose role is to educate others about "the grievances prompting Islamist extremism" or using their "insiders' knowledge" to help security services in the fight against terrorism (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 131). They are rarely central characters with whom the viewer is invited to identify (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 131). Furthermore, because of the "sleeper cell" threat of Islamist terrorists having embedded themselves in American society, all Arabs and Muslims are seen as inherently suspect (Alsultany 2012: 10), despite these positive portrayals and attempts to highlight peaceful interpretations of Islam.

The "goodness" of Muslim characters generally comes from an unproblematized love-for or loyalty-to "America". Their value lies in their impassioned patriotism, but we know little to nothing else about them, or why they feel this way. Perhaps writers feel the need to make "good" Muslims unequivocally patriotic to take away any doubt that they are sympathetic to terrorism because, as Mamdani notes, "Muslims are assumed to be bad until they perform and prove their allegiance to the U.S. Nation" (Alsultany 2012: 15). As such, "acceptable" Muslim-ness is performed or produced through tropes of the Arab and/or Muslim patriot, and as the victim of hate crimes generated in the context of the "War on Terror" (Alsultany 2012: 14). Morey and Yaqin agree that "the Muslim stranger's allegiances are always in question" (2011: 37); as such, their membership in the "us" or the "self" is always tenuous. Despite their regular performances of loyalty and patriotism to performatively assert their "national belonging", Muslim-Americans are in a "double bind of performativity" because, especially since 9/11, their Muslim-ness is "viewed suspiciously as a conflicting allegiance" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 40). As such, the "good" Muslim unsettles and potentially exposes the arbitrariness of the Americans versus

Muslims Self-Other dichotomy, as "Good" Muslim-Americans reside uneasily at the nexus of these two categories, belonging to both, and thus neither. Although the "good" Muslim has a dual identity that includes both Muslim-ness and American-ness, this identity remains underdeveloped (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 157), along with unanswered questions of how they navigate or reconcile this dual identity. Mainstream representations of diversity remain rather restrictive, as they promote "patriotic sameness" through the figure of the "good" Muslim (Alsultany 2012: 134), and always promote American identity *over* Muslim identity, with the latter subservient to the former (Alsultany 2012: 148). As Alsultany summarizes: "Arab and Muslim Americans are included up to a point, so long as they comply with acceptable forms of sameness and difference" (2012: 161). As such, "Good" Muslims are trapped in a loyalty paradox: their identity is defined by patriotism and loyalty to "America", and yet their loyalty is always in doubt because their Muslim-ness causes them to remain fundamentally "other".

Neither Muslim villains nor "good guys" have any context to explain their motivations for their terrorism or their patriotism, and there seems to be little room for Muslims to be critical of American politics of the "War on Terror", and yet not be terrorists. When it comes to portraying Muslims, there is little nuance: either they are terrorists, or lovers of America who are actively engaged in fighting terrorism. Indeed, their "goodness" is contingent on their participation in the fight against terrorists (Alsultany 2012: 10). The "good" Muslim also reveals the fragility and arbitrariness of the Self/Other or Us/Them distinctions of narratives of the "War on Terror" because "it reminds both sides in the 'clash of civilizations' that the separateness that is advanced as a reason for shoring up 'our' culture against the barbarians at the gate … is a complete fallacy" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 207). The "good" Muslim-American resides at the intersection of the "self" and the "other", and thus challenges these binaries.

Kundnani notes the liberal caveat that "Muslims are acceptable when depoliticized" (2014: 16), or that "there is only one political act that Muslim fellow citizens can perform without suspicion: rejection of their own Muslim identity" (2014: 65). He highlights that the only Muslim characters "raising political issues" are terrorists, as narratives of "radicalization" collapse "political dissent and terrorism" into each other (Kundnani 2014: 266-7). As discussed in chapter four, Muslim villains do criticize Western and American imperialism and intervention in the Middle East, although these critiques remain superficial and poorly articulated.

In contrast with terrorist critiques of US foreign policy, Kundnani describes the figure of the "moderate" Muslim, which is very similar to what I call the trope of the "good" Muslim. In a passage that deserves to be quoted at length, he aptly describes the difficult position in which "good" or "moderate" Muslims find themselves, according to which they must be perfectly loyal and patriotic to "America" in every way, or else be perceived as sympathetic to terrorism and thus enemies of the United States:

> Muslims must forget what they know about Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan and instead align themselves with the fantasies of the war on terror; they are expected to constrain their religion to the private sphere but also to speak out publicly against extremists' misinterpretations of Islam; they are supposed to see themselves as liberal individuals but also declare an allegiance to the national collective; they are meant to put their capacity for reason above blind faith but not let it lead to criticisms of the West; and they have to publicly condemn using violence to achieve political ends – except when their own governments do so. (2014: 110)

As such, good Muslims must treat US foreign policy as beyond reproach, which often involves distancing themselves from their Muslim identity. While the terrorists are blindly loyal to their

violent interpretations of Islam, the Good Muslim must be blindly loyal to the US, even when American policies are harmful to their fellow Muslims – and, indeed, to non-Muslim Americans as well, who also experience negative consequences of American foreign policy.

We can also use a postcolonial framework to discuss the case of the Muslim-American as one who is colonized. As part of the good/bad Muslim frame, the "bad" Muslim is locked in the pre-modern, and requires "incarceration and military action", while the "good" Muslim is secular and subject to Western influence, and can thus "be assisted into modernity" (Razack 2008: 49). A troubling example is that after Fara (discussed below) has proven her worth and become accepted as a good and loyal CIA agent by her peers on *Homeland*, she no longer wears a *hijab*, except as might be required by certain contexts, such as going out in Islamabad, where her non-Muslim counterparts also wear headscarves. She also dons more "American" forms of dress, such as pants and typical Western business attire (S04), as opposed to the floor-length skirt she wears when she is first introduced (*Homeland* S03E02). Fara's discarding of her headscarf is not addressed in the show, but may perhaps be implied as a "logical" progression of her American identity rising to greater prominence over her Muslim and Persian identity. When she is introduced, Fara suffers verbal and emotional abuse from her superior (S03E02; discussed below), so her change in dress could also be partly in response to the racism and xenophobia she has encountered in the workplace. It is important to note that she proclaims her Americanness and pushes her father to speak English instead of Farsi (S03E08); as she gains expertise and confidence in her work experience at the CIA, it is likely that her greater valuation of English and Americanness over Farsi and Muslim-ness would only grow. Of course, feeling American should not *necessarily* preclude speaking Farsi and also embracing a Muslim identity, but in

Fara's case it seems to be so, as she discards her *hijab* and chooses English as her language of choice, even in the private sphere of her home.

Rejection of one's own language and culture is troubling, and recalls Fanon's discussion of the colonized's inferiority complex (1952/2008: 2-3), regarding which he asserted the wretchedness of "the black man who strives to whiten his race" (Appiah 2008: xii). Fanon argues that the more the colonized assimilates the cultural values of the colonizer and rejects his or her own Blackness, the more White he or she becomes (1952/2008: 2-3); similarly, the more the Muslim-American rejects his or her own Muslim-ness, the more American he or she becomes. bell hooks, meanwhile, argues that "assimilation" is a "social policy upholding white supremacy" that demands that people of colour assimilate and become "honorary whites" in order to succeed (1995: 189). In the case of Muslim-Americans on *Homeland*, we see characters assimilate towards becoming honorary White Americans by rejecting markers of their Muslim-ness, if not their Muslim-ness writ large.

hooks also points to colour caste systems in which one's social value increases proportionately to the lightness of one's skin (1995: 120); likewise, the more Westernized a Muslim-American is, the greater their value (e.g. Fara on *Homeland*). Furthermore, although their Muslim-ness does mark them as "Other", White Muslims tend to receive more sympathetic treatment and more character development than their POC counterparts (e.g. Brody and Aileen on *Homeland*; the Al-Harazi family on *24*). hooks argues that "black folks who 'love blackness'" have "decolonized [their] minds and broken with the kind of white supremacist thinking that suggests [they] are inferior, inadequate, marked by victimization", but they are also often "punished by society for daring to break with the status quo" and "risk being seen as unfriendly or dangerous" (1995: 158). As discussed above, because Muslim-ness is read as dangerous and

threatening to America and its (non-Muslim) citizens, the main way for a Muslim-American to increase their perceived loyalty and trustworthiness is to reject or at least temper their Muslim-ness and project "American-ness". It is important to note that the patriotic "Good" Muslim is almost never seen praying (a notable exception being Darwyn on *Sleeper Cell*, although he is usually seen praying with the terrorist cell that he has infiltrated) or wearing symbols of visible Muslim-ness (a notable exception being Fara's *hijab*).[13] The expectation that loyalty is reflected in tempering one's Muslim-ness plays into processes of domination, rather than challenging them; bell hooks argues instead for "self-love as a revolutionary intervention that undermines practices of domination" (1995: 162). Although the "friendly cultural stereotype" can embrace and celebrate their Muslim-ness, such as in the case of Raja in *Aliens in America* (see chapter six), the "good" patriotic Muslim cannot do so without also increasing suspicion.

Although two key examples discussed are those of Fara on *Homeland* and Nadia on *24*, most "good" Muslims (31 of 35) are men, and all but two (*Sleeper Cell*'s Darwyn Al-Sayeed, who is African-American; and a minor character named Adil on *Sleeper Cell*, who is Bosnian) are "Middle Eastern", and none are converts, or at least are not indicated as such.

Homeland*: Danny Galvez*

*Homeland'*s Danny Galvez is an example of a "good" Muslim; he makes so few waves that his character is never very developed, and he is spared issues such as the trouble his female counterparts face for wearing a *hijab* or other visible markers of Muslim-ness. He is a tokenistic background "good Muslim": all we know about Galvez is that he is apparently loyal to Carrie and the CIA, that he is of Guatemalan and Lebanese descent, a fluent Arabic speaker (S01E04), and a Muslim (S01E09). However, even "good" Muslims are not immune to having their

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[13] This is in stark contrast with Muslim villains, who are often seen praying (*24, Homeland, Sleeper Cell, The Grid*). The Friendly Cultural Stereotype is also often seen praying (e.g. Raja on *Aliens in America*, Arastoo on *Bones*), as are some characters who avoid performing tropes of Muslim-ness (e.g. Sayid on *Lost*).

Muslim-ness cast doubt on their loyalty and trustworthiness. When terrorist leader Abu Nazir appears to have escaped from within a secured perimeter, Carrie notices that Galvez is unaccounted for, and suspects him of being Nazir's mole (S02E11). When a colleague asks Carrie if there is any plausible reason to suspect Galvez, Carrie simply replies: "He *is* a Muslim" (S02E11). Galvez is innocent, but he is tackled on his way to the hospital to treat a wound previously received in the line of duty. Although he is quickly exonerated, it is important to note that Carrie did not justify her suspicion of Galvez specifically on the basis that his absence needed to be accounted for and was thus a logical lead to follow, but because he is Muslim: his Muslim-ness marks him as potentially disloyal and having a built-in motive for aiding terrorists. This incident shows how even a "Good" Muslim's belonging in the "us" can quickly crumble and instead see them treated as a dangerous "other".

Carrie's simplistic justification of her suspicion of Galvez can also be read as a critique of racist xenophobia, including that of US counter-terrorism agencies and US policies. However, the audience is left to decode Carrie's statement within the larger context of *Homeland* in which suspecting Muslims of terrorism is likely to be accurate and produce positive results in terms of preventing terrorist attacks. As such, whether or not Carrie's statement is meant to problematize the criminalization of Muslim-ness and Arab-ness, it is consistent with the recurring narrative of these programs that many Muslims *are* terrorists, and thus that it is irresponsible not to investigate them according to the potential risk they pose. Even though many people may not subscribe to the narrative that Muslims are inherently untrustworthy and dangerous, many *do* buy into this narrative, which permits it to have powerful consequences for "real life" foreign policy and for narratives about Muslims and Muslim-Americans in the context of the "War on Terror".

Homeland: *Fara Sherazi*

*Homeland'*s Fara Sherazi is another "good Muslim" stereotype. She is moved by a sense of patriotism: after an attack on the CIA headquarters and when the CIA was in need of Farsi speakers with experience in international finance, she felt compelled to help (S03E08). She pushes her father to speak English rather than Farsi, and when he criticizes her for working for the CIA, she passionately declares: "I'm an American!" (S03E08). Fara even agrees to connect Carrie (the CIA agent protagonist) with her uncle to provide a safe house for Brody (at this point acting as a double agent for the CIA) in Iran, despite the risk to her family (S03E10).

Fara provides a case study of the complex ways gender and race intersect, showing the experiences of Muslim women who may face particular discrimination related to the specifically female Muslim-ness they embody. Fara, or more specifically how she is treated by others, illustrates some of the dynamics of the *hijab* as a visible marker of Muslim-ness. Fara is harassed by her colleagues for being Muslim and for expressing her religious identity through wearing the *hijab*. Even though her superior, Saul Berenson, is generally shown to be reasonably insightful, sensitive, and respectful of others, he verbally abuses Fara for wearing the *hijab*:

And you know what else? While we're talking about an event that left 200 Americans dead on the ground, and what you're doing about it, which is apparently nothing... Forgive me. [sighs] You wearing *that thing* on your head is one big 'fuck you' to the people who would've been your co-workers, except they perished in a blast right out there. So if you need to wear it, if you really need to, which is your right, you better be the best analyst we've ever seen, and that means don't tell me there's nothing. Give me a plan. Give me a goddamn plan or don't say anything. Is that clear? (S03E02)

This leaves Fara in tears, but she then tells him about a plan that proves to be successful. This experience would not likely happen to a male counterpart in her position, such as Danny Galvez (discussed above), given that the absence of religious markers in the type of Western "business casual" attire worn by male CIA agents in *Homeland* makes him unlikely to be berated for visibly Muslim attire. Furthermore, it seems less likely that Saul would speak to a male agent in such a condescending tone that aims to silence his subordinate if he or she fails to perform appropriately. In the workplace, as elsewhere, condescension frequently follows gendered and age-based lines. Thus, while their Muslim-ness marks both Galvez and Fara as potentially disloyal, for Fara, the intersection of sexism, ageism, and anti-Muslim sentiment makes her particularly vulnerable to micro-aggressions (and serious verbal abuse) as part of her everyday experience of being a young, female, *hijab*-wearing Muslim working for the CIA.

It is important that Saul, who is supposed to be an expert on the Middle East, associates Muslim-ness with terrorism, by qualifying the *hijab*, a gendered marker of Muslim-ness, as a "fuck you" to victims of terrorism. This reflects an attitude Kundnani notes in *Homeland,* which suggests that "the more culturally Muslim you are, the more likely you are to be a terrorist" (2014: 265), because "Islamic values" are "presented as implying terrorism" (2014: 265). It should also be noted that Saul's berating speech is particularly harsh as it comes at a time when Fara has been working on this case for what appears to be a matter of hours, and has been working for the CIA for just over one week (S03E02). As noted above, Fara had previously worked in a bank but volunteered to move to the CIA because of their need for Farsi speakers who could work in the area of finance. Fara's case illustrates that despite their loyalty and patriotism, the Good Muslim's "Muslim-ness" is offensive to their "American" colleagues as a sign of sympathy for terrorism, and thus casts doubt on their deeply-held loyalty and patriotism.

24*: Nadia Yassir*

Like Galvez on *Homeland, 24*'s Nadia Yassir is another counter-terror agent who is perceived as suspicious because she is an Arabic speaker and a Muslim. When she is subjected to racial profiling that adds a layer of security to her computer log-ins and slows down her work, she professes to be not normally "sensitive to this kind of thing", but asserts that her security clearance is very high, which implies that she has already been extensively vetted and proven her trustworthiness. Her (White, male) superior advises her to "stay focused on the big picture" and reminds her that it is to be expected for a Muslim working in counter-terror to "have to put up with some unfair measures" (S06E06). As on *Homeland*, "[r]acial discrimination is presented as a regrettable but understandable tactic" (Kundnani 2014: 266). Razack notes that "[i]f the state is able to preserve an appearance of tolerance at all, it is only able to do so because the collective punishment of all Muslims is understood as reasonable, a necessary move to preserve Western civilization" (2008: 50). Thus, "good" Muslims are expected to accept racial profiling and discrimination in the workplace as serving the greater good of protecting the United States and American citizens. Such a cautious position is arguably sensible, and if anyone is to blame for the unfair treatment of innocent Muslims, it is the Muslim terrorists.

Milo, a co-worker and love interest of Nadia's, defends her, arguing for her belonging in the American "self" on the grounds that she has lived in the United States since the age of two, and is a registered Republican (S06E06); this implies that it would be more justified to suspect a more recent immigrant or someone with left-leaning political or ideological views. For much of the season, none of Nadia's colleagues seem suspicious of her and are primarily sympathetic to how she has been affected by the heightened security measures; however, this quickly changes as soon as a suspected leak is discovered. Nadia's previously strong credibility and loyalty is

immediately questioned, and although Milo initially defends her loyalty and decries this racial profiling as "racist", an Agent Doyle asserts: "yeah, she is a Muslim. That's enough to go on. Everyone here is thinkin' it, even if they won't say it" (S06E14). Such an attitude is also reminiscent of conservative fears that efforts to be "politically correct" could ultimately jeopardize national security. "Everyone is thinking it" is also a knee-jerk reaction when people are accused of racism or prejudice and creates a narrative whereby the only difference between those people and the rest of "us" are that they are not too afraid of so-called "P.C. culture" to say what "everyone" is thinking. This trend is illustrated in the praise for Donald Trump for being perceived to "tell it like it is" and say what he feels, even if it is inappropriate or not "politically correct". When the breach does appear to have originated from her station, even Milo loses faith in Nadia, and she is briefly processed as an enemy combatant, before new evidence supports her innocence (S06E15). Though he does admit to being racist, Doyle defends his actions on the grounds of her Muslim-ness making her inherently more likely to be untrustworthy than her non-Muslim counterparts: "This country is under attack by Islamic terrorists. We had reason to believe there was a mole in this building. Starting with you wasn't racist. It was common sense" (S06E16). Despite feeling betrayed, as a deeply loyal "good" Muslim, Nadia stoically returns to her job (S06E15). As such, Nadia represents the "über-patriot" who allows his or her rights to be violated in service to the United States (Alsultany 2012: 61). Although Nadia goes on to have her security restrictions lifted and becomes acting director of the Counter Terrorist Unit (S06E19-24), the above incident shows how quickly "Muslim-ness" can cast doubt on one's loyalty so that even one's closest colleagues may turn on them. Despite Nadia's promotion, her enduring Otherness means that she would never be immune to facing similar suspicion again in the future.

24: *Walid Al-Razani*

Walid Al-Razani is another über-patriotic Muslim on *24*: he is willing to allow his rights to be violated – in this case, his privacy and the private records of his organization, the Islamic-American Alliance (IAA): "Maybe we should give them what they want. We have nothing to hide. Maybe we have to sacrifice a little privacy. The country is under attack, Sandra. We cannot pretend it isn't" (S06E02). This reinforces an over-arching theme of the "War on Terror" that dichotomizes "security" and "liberty", with the former firmly entrenched as more important, and the latter a luxury that can be taken away as needed. However, Sandra Palmer, the legal advisor for the IAA, insists on protecting the rights of past and present IAA employees from being violated: she deletes the files, which prompts Walid's arrest (S06E02). Underscoring the greater importance of security over individual freedoms in times of great threat, Sandra's brother, President Wayne Palmer, is scandalized that while people are dying, she's "making a civil rights case out of it", insisting that if Walid is indeed innocent, then he "has nothing to worry about" (S06E03). While being held with other suspected persons under the revised enemy combatant statute, Walid overhears discussion from people who are knowledgeable about and may be involved with that day's attacks; he agrees to go undercover and get close to the group in order to learn more (S06E04).

It is eventually revealed that these men are just spectators: although they are celebrating the day's attacks, they were not involved, and Walid is severely beaten by them and accused of betraying "his" people, when they learn that he was spying on them (S06E06). It is important to note here that the "innocence" of these men is tempered by their moral support of terrorism, and although not terrorists, they are certainly not portrayed as sympathetic victims, as they underscore perceptions of Muslims as being supportive of terrorism and prone to violence. This

recalls Alsultany's argument regarding the need to regulate sympathy for Muslim men (see chapter four). As such, illegally detaining them and violating their privacy does not appear particularly reprehensible, as this is no less than they deserve for celebrating terrorist attacks that killed American citizens. Such attitudes have social and political currency in "real" life, as evidenced in Presidential candidate Donald Trump's claims in 2015 that "thousands" of American Muslims in New Jersey celebrated the 9/11 attacks; despite the fact that this has been widely disproven, many individuals including Trump persist in asserting this to be the case (Kessler 2015). Nevertheless, Walid feels ashamed for having spied on them and, although he had thought it was the right thing to do, afterwards feels that it was wrong (S06E07).

Walid resides at the difficult intersection of identities that is inherent in being Muslim-American – when his loyalty is initially called into doubt by virtue of his Muslim-ness, evidenced by government agents investigating him and members of his organization, he asserts his patriotism and loyalty to America by participating in the violation of civil rights, which is defended in the name of fighting terrorism. When his efforts are rewarded not only by violence and injury, but by proving to have been entirely futile, he feels that he has betrayed his own identity. Walid cannot fully belong in either an "American" identity or a "Muslim" identity.

The Grid: *Raza Michaels*

The character of Raza Michaels on *The Grid* miniseries is another example of a "good" Muslim-American who works in counter-terrorism, as a top Middle East analyst for the CIA, prompting him to be recruited for a special joint task force (ep. 1/2). Like Nadia on *24*, he also experiences discrimination in the workplace and is forced to take lie detector tests far more regularly than his non-Muslim colleagues, about which he is advised to "suck it up, and charge ahead" (ep. 1/2). For the most part this is what he does, although he does complain that the

questions are "verging on harassment" and that the treatment is unfair (ep. 3). Raza's sister Nili, meanwhile, resents being targeted for violations of her own privacy because of Raza's sensitive work for the CIA, arguing that he does not understand that "this country doesn't trust our people. This country doesn't trust *you*" (ep. 1/2). She criticizes him for having "no politics" and tells him that his Islam is an anachronism, and he rebuts that she is "just as bigoted as they are", and warns her: "If you rant like a radical, they'll begin to treat you like one. And then you'll have no privacy at all" (ep. 1/2). Raza, an archetypal "good" Muslim who privileges his loyalty to America above his Muslim-ness, thus reinforces the narratives that security measures are more important than civil liberties such as privacy.

Emily, an MI:6 British intelligence agent and Raza's love interest, asks how he navigates his dual identity, noting that it "can't be easy being an American Muslim working for the CIA", to which Raza replies: "Easy? No. But I'm a better Muslim and a better American for it. I have to think about who I am, and what I believe. Most people take those things for granted" (ep. 1/2). Morey and Yaqin aptly note that Raza does not explain *how* his dual identity helps him better appreciate both his Americanness and his Muslim-ness (2011: 157) and suggest that the program makes a belaboured effort at "squeezing out the hyphenated subject" (2011: 154). When Raza coerces his cousin Omar into providing information on financial transactions funding a terrorist group, Omar questions the possibility of existence of Raza's dual identity: "You're not an American. You're not an Arab. What is your name? Massif. But you call yourself Michaels, an American bastardization of our great family name. That is what you are – a bastardization of a man" (ep. 3). When Omar is murdered for providing Raza with information on a Saudi funder of terrorism, Raza's sister bitterly blames him for getting "into bed with murderers" (ep. 3).

However, Raza insists that Omar was not innocent, either (ep. 3). Raza argues that he is comfortable in his dual identity:

> Raza: Do you remember what father used to say? How we were destined to live in two
>
> worlds?
>
> Nili: And we'd never find a home until we came to peace with it.
>
> Raza: I have made peace with myself, Nili. (ep. 3)

As such, although Raza argues that he is settled in his dual identity, his sister and his cousin refuse to believe this, and accuse him of forsaking his Muslim identity.

Raza is also an embodiment of Alsultany's assessment of "good" Muslims as mouthpieces who explain Islam to their non-Muslim counterparts – and to their Western audiences. The show explicitly and heavy-handedly contrasts multiple perspectives on Islam. This exercise so aptly summarizes *The Grid*'s concern with appearing even-handed in its characterization of Islam that it is worth quoting at length to illustrate the competing sentiments at play. Maren Jackson, a central protagonist, expresses anti-Muslim sentiment on the grounds of how "they" treat "their" women, reflecting the perspective championed by White feminists, among others, in order to justify the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, and which thus has very powerful real-life consequences for both foreign policy and on the lives (and deaths) of many:

> You write that Islam is the religion of the oppressed. I say it appeals to oppressed men
>
> because it sanctions the oppression of women. To me, Islam is one thing—fear. And until
>
> the clerics can stand up and say that killing people is the work of the devil, and that it is a
>
> woman's God-given right to eat, sleep, walk, do, say whatever she wants, I'm dumb,
>
> deaf, and blind to what they're selling. (ep. 1/2)

To this, Raza provides the "good" Muslim rebuttal, educating his colleagues and the viewer about more nuanced perspectives on Islam and Muslim people:

> Have you ever bothered to ask a Muslim woman if she feels oppressed? Islam is the faith of over a billion people. Are you then saying all one billion are criminal? I find it inexcusable that a woman with your standing could judge an entire religion by the actions of a fundamentalist faction. How would you feel if I judged all Christians by the actions of the KKK? Islam inspired a humane civilization, and made some of the greatest contributions to the culture of the world. But because of some narrow thinking by governments like ours and people like...you, we're judged by our worst example. (ep. 1/2)

Max Canary, another main protagonist, reminds the viewers of the bottom line of the "War on Terror", finding this debate on Islam to be irrelevant, because of the reality of terrorism. However, he apparently misses the point of the debate on whether the actions of a few should reflect on the many: "I lost my best friend in the World Trade Center. He had a wife, a new baby. He was just a guy going to work. … We buried his leg. That's what was left – his leg. That's just one reason why I will never stop going after these guys" (ep. 1/2). Max does not clarify if "these guys" specifically refers to Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, or all Muslims. Raza appears cowed and silenced by Max's speech, and does not presume to comment further on the fallacy of understanding Islam solely based on events such as 9/11. With the privileging of a security framework in the context of the "War on Terror", questions of identity and motivations for terrorism are brushed aside in favour of emphasizing what is at stake in failing to prevent terrorism, thus sidelining the question that had been posed as to whether or not Muslim-ness is inherently responsible for Islamic terrorism, and thus whether or not the allegiances of Muslims

should always be questioned. Raza's presence as a mouthpiece to defend the majority of Muslims from implication in terrorism and oppression of women helps programs such as *The Grid* deflect criticism of negative and reductionist portrayals of Islam and of Muslims. However, this question remains decidedly less important than doing whatever it takes to fight terrorism, even if this involves unfairly painting all Muslims with a broad brush. Reflecting the need to regulate sympathy for the dangerous Muslim man (Alsultany 2012: 16), it is important to regularly remind viewers of the bottom line of the "War on Terror": that Islamic terrorists want to attack the West, and they must be stopped.

"Cameos"[14]: Minor Characters

Even minor characters who do not work in counter-terrorism are expected to perform their "goodness" by helping to fight terrorism whenever the opportunity arises. On *24*, Jack Bauer receives help from two brothers who own a sporting goods store and who were attacked by rioters and looters because it is known that they are Arab (S04E13). They insist that they are "good citizens" who had nothing to do with the day's attacks, but insist on not only providing Bauer with weapons, but staying to help him fight due to love for America and a desire to distinguish themselves from their "bad" counterparts: "For years, we've been blamed for the attacks by these terrorists. We grew up in this neighbourhood. This country's our home", and wanting to help seek justice: "If you're fighting the people who caused today's bloodshed, then we'll help you" (S04E13). As classic "good guy" Arabs/Muslims, they insist on their difference from the Muslim villains who make the rest of them look bad, and aim to be actively involved in fighting against them to protect America and Americans: "My brother and I are more angry about these attacks today than you are. So we're gonna stand up and try to be part of the

---

[14] This term is borrowed from Jack Shaheen, who refers to gratuitous negative portrayals of Arabs in films whose plots otherwise have nothing to do with Arabs as "cameos" (2009/2001).

solution" (S04E13). Alternatively, the implication is that private Muslim-American citizens who do not risk their lives to help American protagonists fight terrorists remain part of the "problem".

"Good" Muslims are also expected to inform on their own relatives, such as in the case of *The Grid*'s Hamid Samoudi who works with British intelligence agents when he learns that his brother Akil has become involved with a terrorist organization (ep. 1/2), or the father of *The Grid*'s Kaz Moore who reluctantly works with American officials to prevent Kaz's planned attack (ep. 5/6). Hamid is praised by a British intelligence agent as "a credit to [his] community and [his] country" (ep. 5/6); thus, Muslims who do not participate in counter-terrorism are not a credit to their communities and their countries.

Sleeper Cell: *Darwyn Al-Sayeed*

Sleeper Cell's Darwyn Al-Sayeed is another key example of the patriotic "good" Muslim. He is an African-American FBI agent who goes undercover to infiltrate an Islamic terrorist sleeper cell. Some of his superiors are surprised that he is, in fact, a Muslim and that this is not part of his cover, but they recognize that Darwyn is a crucial asset. Nevertheless, Darwyn's Muslim-ness casts doubt on him, and he does occasionally have to defend his loyalty, such as when a new supervisor accuses Darwyn of "misguided sympathy for your little Muslim brothers out there that have started a war with this country", to which Darwyn passionately replies: "Don't you dare question my loyalty, ever. I'm a Muslim. I am a Muslim, and an American. And what I do every day, I do for my God and my country" (S02E03). Darwyn's devotion to his faith is his primary character motivation: he is horrified at the abuse of his religion for the purposes of terror and will risk his own life to save the lives of others, and to "destroy those who [want] to destroy [his] faith" (S01E10). He regularly defends Islam and urges others, including his case worker, to learn more about it, and see that "true Islam", in fact, has little to do with the rhetoric

used to support terror. Morey and Yaqin suggest that "for the American viewer Darwyn represents 'Islam Lite': Islam with all the alien and uncomfortable bits taken out" (2011: 172). He is extremely moral and always does what he thinks is right, to the point of hubris, and sometimes jeopardizes the mission or accidentally gets people killed (e.g. S01E07) – at least until the final episode of the series. One exception to this rule is his relationship with Gayle, for which he feels guilty for having pre-marital sex; however, this also humanizes and "Americanizes" Darwyn as a "red-blooded male" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 171).

Even though *Sleeper Cell*'s main character is a "good" Muslim, this underlines how "bad" the rest of the Muslims are: as he is one of the only "good" characters, this ratio suggests that while there *are* Muslims who oppose terrorism, a far greater number perpetuate or support terrorist acts. The Muslim villains portrayed in the show are also exceptionally backwards and "barbaric", as established in the very first episode when Bobby, one of the cell members, is revealed to have potentially jeopardized the mission by bragging over the phone to an uncle about his involvement; he is buried up to his neck and is violently stoned to death by cell members who had been his comrades until only moments before (S01E01). Cell leader Farik insists that stoning is chosen because it is "our traditional punishment since the days of the Prophet" (S01E01). Such stereotypical barbarism is especially surprising since the show's executive producers "deliberately set out to challenge simplistic stereotypes" with the character of Darwyn (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 166). Yet, *Sleeper Cell* provides one of the most appalling spectacles of barbarism in any program that features Muslim villains. Darwyn, disgusted by this cruelty, risks not only the ire of the cell leader but his entire mission, and thus the lives of those he is trying to protect, by shooting Bobby in the head to end his suffering (S01E01). In the same episode, Farik promotes the commission of honour crimes as serving to "promote virtue and

prevent vice", even providing the "community service" of having Darwyn spy on a teenage Yemeni-American girl in order to provide "proof" that she is involved in activities – such as going to parties with American boys – that justify "honour killing" (S01E01). Darwyn was not initially aware of the purpose of his mission and is disturbed when he subsequently learns the news that she has been murdered (S01E01).

Sleeper Cell is heavy-handed in emphasizing Darwyn's patriotism, such as when one of his targets asks him "What kind of true Muslim work[s] for the Americans?", prompting Darwyn to respond: "I don't work for the Americans. I *am* American" (S02E07). Such nationalistic speeches are typical of the performance of the "good" Muslim – recall Fara's impassioned "I'm an American!" declaration on *Homeland*. However, reminding us of other cases in which the Muslim-ness of characters implies that their loyalty is always in question, Darwyn's character takes a sharp turn at the end of the series. Shortly after Darwyn refrained from killing Karrar, a terror cell leader, quoting a Qur'anic verse urging one not to let anger provoke injustice, he seeks revenge upon the previous cell leader, after Farik has Darwyn's girlfriend Gayle murdered, and after another cell member's attack succeeds, killing 532 people (S02E07-8). When motivated by revenge, Darwyn's otherwise cool head quickly heats up. Seeking to kill Farik himself, he seeks CIA assistance, which is grudgingly provided, along with comments from his contacts implying that Darwyn is really not so different from the terrorists, as he is going on a "suicide mission"; that the agency is not in the "martyrdom business"; and calling him names like "Jihad Joe" (S02E08). So while Darwyn does not become perceived as a traitor to the agency, per se, his belonging in the "us" does shift more to a perception of his acting more like "them". Unlike his previous emphasis on aspects of the Qur'an that preach tolerance rather than violence, Darwyn quotes an "eye for an eye" passage about revenge, noting "woman for woman" just before a

targeted strike kills Farik's wife Samia: Darwyn had planted a satellite phone on her for this purpose (S02E08). While Darwyn had been pushed past his breaking point by the murder of his girlfriend and his failure to stop a suicide bombing, it seems out of character compared to his behaviour in the rest of the series. Thus, not only do "positive" portrayals reinforce negative stereotypes by contrast, even the staunchest "good" Muslims sometimes end up bearing uncomfortable resemblances to the villains they oppose. Although programs that feature sympathetic and diverse Muslim characters have been lauded as combating racist stereotypes, Alsultany warns us of the dangers of being satisfied with the inclusion of "good" Muslims:

> If we take these positive portrayals at face value, if we believe that complex characterizations of terrorists and valiant portrayals of patriotic Muslims do solve the problem of stereotyping, then racist policies and practices will persist under the guise of antiracism. A diversity of representations, even an abundance of sympathetic characters, does not in itself demonstrate the end of racism, nor does it solve the problem of racial stereotyping. (2012: 13)

As such, there is much at stake in thinking critically about "positive" portrayals of Muslims in dramas that also present a plethora of Muslim villains. We should not assume that such characterizations are evidence of a shift in public perceptions of Muslims, and they are still involved in practices of "othering". Indeed, as Cox might remind us, such portrayals are "for someone and for some purpose" (1981: 128).

Tyrant*: Bassam "Barry" Al-Fayeed*

Portrayals of Muslim-ness are somewhat different on *Tyrant* as most of the main characters are secular in their behaviour and ideology, and Muslim-ness comes up very little in relation to the members of the central family of the show: the Al-Fayeeds, whose tyrannical rule

is reflected in the title. Main character Bassam "Barry" Al-Fayeed is confirmed to be a lapsed Muslim, and it is noted that he and his Christian wife decided to avoid religion and raise their children in a secular home and life (e.g. S02E03). However, as the series progresses, we do see Barry turn to religion and prayer in difficult times (S01E07; S02E03). Barry is quite different from the other "good" Muslims as he does not perform a tokenistic Muslim-ness and is not a counter-terror agent. He does, however, represent the moral authority of the West. This difference in performing "good" Muslim-ness also reflects a fundamental difference between this show and the other American programs discussed: although an American production, the show is primarily set in the fictional Middle-Eastern country of Abbudin. Whereas the counter-terror programs studied in this work are about defending the United States and American interests, this program is about the future of Abbudin, particularly regarding the desire of the people to overthrow an authoritarian regime in favour of a democratic one, in addition to debating the role that religion and secularism should play in ruling a country.

When the series starts, Barry has been in exile in the United States for two decades in which he has not returned to his home country of Abbudin, which is ruled by his father. He is a pediatrician and even his wife and teenage children know very little about his family's wealth and political power (S01E01). When he reluctantly returns to Abbudin for his nephew's wedding (S01E01), he is exposed to barbaric practices carried out by his family – which he argues is in the "oppression business" (S01E02) and the government it leads, such as hangings, which are "practically the national pastime", along with other forms of political violence (S01E03). Barry is the lone voice advocating for the respect of human rights, such as the right to demonstrate peacefully (S01E04). Demonstrating the greater Western sensitivity to women's rights, he also "saves" Muslim women from their abusive, patriarchal, and terrorist Muslim husbands (S02E05).

Although Barry appears as the moral compass of Abbudin, and the only dissenting voice trying to counsel others against barbaric rule, he is also flawed, and his apparently idyllic family life is marred by his wife's laments that he is emotionally closed off (S01E01). He is also shown to strike his son in anger (S01E01), which undermines his role in representing Western morality and civilization in contrast to Muslim backwardness. Although his brother Jamal is now a ruthless dictator and rapist, when they were children it was Barry, and not Jamal, who was capable of murder upon their father's urging (S01E01; S01E09). Barry also appears more pragmatic and intelligent than his brother and his advisors, as he argues that use of excessive violence is illogical, and will only further stoke the fires of rebellion: "I'm not saying don't use violence because it's wrong. I'm saying don't use violence because it doesn't work" (S01E04). His wife also accuses him of getting more involved in political intrigue in Abbudin not out of a selfless desire to do good, but that he's "starting to get off" on these power plays (S01E05). As such, although Barry is largely perceived as reasonable and just, questions are certainly also raised as to whether he is primarily motivated by seeking the greater good or by seeking personal power and influence.

Nevertheless, Barry is seen as a hero and a leader. His old friend Fauzi, a dissident journalist who originally felt that Bassam was joining the opposition by working with his family, feels that he is spreading hope (S01E07). Barry plans a coup because he does not believe that his brother is fit to run the country; however, the coup fails and Barry is put in prison and sentenced to death (S01E10; S02E01). The people demand Barry's release and call for him to become their leader, so Jamal's advisors – and especially his wife – urge Jamal to execute Barry quickly so that he will no longer inspire resistance (S02E01). Jamal secretly spares him from execution but leaves him to die in the desert (S02E01). Barry's survival of wandering and nearly dying in the

desert also draws on Christ archetypes to cement his status as Abbudin's "saviour". After spending some time in hiding—and apparently returning from the dead—Barry resumes the fight for his country. Although he initially conceals his true identity, he once again inspires others (S02E06). Barry becomes a resistance leader and helps to drive the "Caliphate" (*Tyrant*'s stand-in for ISIS/Daesh) out of Abbudin (S02E11). As he does all of this under a false identity, he relies only on his ability to lead, without the benefit of his name and reputation. He also shows compassion, and saves the life of Ihab Rashid, who is responsible for committing atrocities and working with the "Caliphate"; even though it would have been easy to let Ihab die of his injuries, Barry says that he has had enough of death and killing (S02E11). Once Barry's identity is revealed, the people support him as a leader more than ever, and 5000 people rally in the square, demanding that Jamal step down and calling for Barry to become president (S02E12).

Barry's popularity and aptitude for leadership remain somewhat problematic as they reinforce colonial attitudes through the juxtaposition of Jamal, who has spent his whole life in the Middle East and is violent and misogynistic, with Barry, who chose to move to America at the first possible opportunity, is progressive, and saves women. Barry is also a doctor who heals people, which further distances him from Jamal's violence. Their differences are also reflected in their physical appearances: Jamal has a more typically "swarthy" Middle Eastern appearance, and is hairier and darker-skinned than his brother; Barry, meanwhile, is fair-skinned and blue-eyed with a mostly hairless body, and is, in fact, played by a White actor (Adam Rayner). Particularly because according to the plot of *Tyrant* Barry and Jamal are full biological brothers, these physical differences are important; this recalls critiques of *Disney*'s *Aladdin* for depicting "bad guys" with "beards and large bulbous noses, sinister eyes and heavy accents" whereas

Aladdin does not have a large nose, a beard, a turban, or an accent (Shaheen 2009/2001: 58, citing Yousef Salem of California's South Bay Islamic Association).

Tyrant*: Fauzi*

Fauzi, Bassam's old friend who is a journalist, is an unambiguously "good" Muslim. While his behaviour is less questionable than Barry's, he is a much less prominent character. Because he is a citizen of dictator-led Abbudin and not an American, Fauzi is not loyal to a regime or government, but he bears many resemblances to his fellow "good" Muslims in terms of his devotion to democracy and justice. According to an American world-view, he must pursue these ideals by opposing his Middle Eastern government, while American Muslims must unquestioningly support theirs. Fauzi does this through being a dissident journalist opposed to the regime. He also challenges reductionist and patriarchal stereotypes about Muslims by being both an observant Muslim and a loving father to his daughter; he praises her intelligence and respects her and her choices. Although Fauzi is an observant Muslim who regularly prays in the mosque, he is contrasted with his beloved daughter Samira who has become more religious, distant, and radical, and is actively involved in the movement of Ihab Rashid, who challenges the government but also wants to replace it with a religious, rather than secular, leadership (S01E03). He is worried about her, but pledges to stand by her side in a protest, even if it turns violent (S01E05).

Fauzi is Barry's moral compass: when Barry argues that he is a pediatrician who has nothing to do with his family's regime, Fauzi reminds him that because Barry is an Al-Fayeed, he is implicated (S01E01). Although Barry has run away to live the "American dream", Fauzi has been tortured and imprisoned for writing about the oppressive actions of the government, such as excessively violent crackdowns on protests (S01E01). Fauzi also says that because of

Barry's return, he feels hope for the first time in twenty years (S01E07). Despite his reluctance to work with a member of the family that has tortured him, he helps Barry to write a speech for his planned coup to oust his tyrannical brother (S01E10). Losing hope in the insurgency against the government which he calls a "slow-motion suicide" or a "stalemate with no end, where everybody loses", he accepts a Dutch offer to become a political refugee and to work for an Amnesty International journal for dissident voices; while he is not giving up on his country, he opts to oppose it from a safe distance (S02E01). He also points out that if the insurgency succeeds in ousting the regime, it will be difficult to form a new government as half of the rebels are liberals, and the other half Islamists (S02E01) – clearly presenting an analogy to the difficulties that Egypt has faced since the removal of Mubarak. His daughter argues that he is abandoning the fight, and refuses to go with him; he continues to respect her choices and does not try to force her to leave, but provides her with her travel documents in the hopes that she will eventually choose to join him (S02E01).

Fauzi is an interesting counterpoint to the blindly loyal and patriotic "good" Muslim-Americans; however, most of his differences lie in his not being American. Fauzi promotes liberal values, which are claimed as "American" values in counter-terrorism dramas. Fauzi opposes tyranny and supports democracy. He is rational and is able to provide "realistic" assessments of complicated situations and their difficult odds for success, most notably regarding regime change in the Middle East. Fauzi is also more "enlightened" than most Muslim men: he is a caring father and promotes his daughter's education and agency, even when her decisions lead to a future that is not the one he had hoped for.

24: *Yusuf Auda*

Yusuf Auda is an interesting character that provides an exception to the patriotism and loyalty that is the primary characteristic of most "good" Muslims. Not coincidentally, Yusuf is not Muslim-American – he is a visiting intelligence agent from the unnamed Middle Eastern country that is suspected of having harboured and possibly supported the terrorists du jour. As an intelligence agent from a country that is under suspicion, Yusuf is not trusted and held at arm's length from the investigation, causing him to be frustrated at being excluded (S02E16), even after he feels that he has proven himself by helping CTU find a terrorist safe house and recover an important audio file (S02E15). The audio file apparently incriminates his country's leadership with the terrorist attacks of the day, but Yusuf (correctly) insists that it is a fabrication; he desperately wants to prove his country's innocence in order to prevent American retaliation (S02E17). Yusuf acts heroically, backing up protagonist Jack Bauer and saving the life of their White, female companion Kate Warner, illustrating his "goodness", even though some characters have lingering doubts about his loyalty (S02E17-19). At this point, Yusuf's performance of Muslim-ness switches to the trope of Muslim-ness as victimhood, specifically as the victim of Western discrimination. Yusuf is assaulted by (White) bigoted men, who pull him from a car and viciously beat him while calling him racist slurs such as "towelhead" and insisting to him that "[his] people" tried to kill Americans that day (S02E19-20). When Jack arrives, too late, to find him dying, Yusuf's heroic last act is to tell Jack that he will not make it, and to leave him behind to save Kate and recover the chip with the audio recording that could prevent an attack against his country (S02E20). Yusuf represents an interesting deviation from the trope of the "good" Muslim because although he performs his "goodness" by fighting terrorists, he is very critical of Americans and American policy and behaviour. He is loyal to his own country and desires to

prevent the bloodshed of his own people. He is doubly "Other": like his Muslim-American counterparts, his Muslim-ness sets him apart, but unlike them, he is not American and has no dual identity or any allegiance whatsoever to the United States. He is completely Other and shares no common ground with his American colleagues other than being a (foreign) intelligence agent who is trying to stop a terrorist attack. Because of this "otherness", Yusuf is mistrusted by his American counterparts who doubt that they share even the common trait of wanting to avoid an attack. Had he not died heroically, he would have likely remained under suspicion, even as he played an important role in helping Jack Bauer, the White protagonist, to "save the day".

Conclusion: The Loyalty Paradox

Characters such as *Homeland*'s Danny Galvez and Fara Sherazi and *24*'s Nadia Yassir exemplify a loyalty paradox that is key to the performance of being a "good" Muslim: because of their unalterable "Muslim-ness", the "good" Muslim's loyalty is also in question, and their belonging in the (American) "self" can quickly crumble, and flip them back to the position of the "Other", or the "them" that is pitted against "us". And yet, ironically, their essential character trait is their patriotism and blind, unswerving loyalty to "America" and the counter-terror agency for which they work – the "good" Muslim's character arc is almost always about navigating their dual identity as both a Muslim and a counter-terror agent. An exception in the cases discussed above is that of Walid on *24*, but even his arc revolves around going undercover to help a counter-terror agency. Aside from their loyalty and patriotism, and their related abhorrence of Islamic terrorism, there is little that remains to define these characters. Characters like *The Grid*'s Raza and *Sleeper Cell*'s Darwyn advance their vision of Islam, but have to regularly educate others about interpretations of Islam that do not promote terrorism, and struggle to defend their dual identities as Muslims and as Americans. As Alsultany argues, "good" Muslims

remain in the background, and "rather than a fully fleshed out individual, [the Good Muslim] remains an idea … a vehicle for liberal sympathy" (2012: 69) when we mourn the violation of their rights, and, at other times, a possible threat that lurks beneath the surface of their apparent loyalty. As with other identity-based narratives, how we depict the "Other" says more about ourselves than it does about "them".

As Razack notes, even for "those Muslims who are able to demonstrate their patriotism, and who are careful not to engage in criticism of the state … [t]he exits are increasingly closed off"; these characters rarely have happy endings (2008: 50). Perhaps the limited story-telling abilities to be had with such under-developed characters explains why they tend to be fairly quickly killed off their programs: shortly after being falsely suspected, Galvez perishes in a terrorist attack along with over 200 of his CIA colleagues (*Homeland,* S02E11). Fara is killed shortly after taking on a more active role in a field assignment and proving her worth (*Homeland,* S04E10). Raza dies heroically while saving children who had been manipulated into becoming suicide bombers (*The Grid*, ep. 5/6). Darwyn is last seen near death after being shot while completing his revenge mission (*Sleeper Cell,* S02E08). Nadia has a happier ending as she finishes the season in a leadership role at the Counter Terrorist Unit, although this is the last that her character is featured in the show (*24,* S06E24). Walid's character arc is concluded with his disillusionment with his "mission" of spying on fellow detained Muslims (*24,* S06E07). Some Muslims transcend the dichotomy of being either a terrorist or blindly loyal to America, such as *Tyrant*'s Barry and Fauzi, but this is only possible because the show is not set in the United States; nevertheless, they promote Western-style liberalism. *24*'s Yusuf Auda provides the most resistance to the trope of the "good" Muslim as he is actively critical of the United States while fighting against terrorism, but his Muslim-ness and foreignness nevertheless marks him as

potentially disloyal and it is presumed that he is fighting terrorists according to ulterior motives. Yusuf's heroic but premature death also reinforces the idea that the story-telling possibilities of "good" Muslims are limited. The fact that these characters are so "disposable" further suggests they are tropes rather than true characters who might be fully developed. This is a reason for which we should not be satisfied with the inclusion of "sympathetic" portrayals of Muslims as indicative of a postracial society, but rather that we should also pay attention to the complexity of Muslim characters. Considering only "negative" versus "positive" portrayals of Muslims seems encouraging, with about 45% "positive" portrayals balancing out the 50% "negative" portrayals (with 5% minor or neutral characters that do not distinguish themselves one way or the other), but only about 10% of Muslim characters are sympathetic and transcend stereotypes (see chapter eight).

In sum, we should not be satisfied with the inclusion of "good" Muslims as a counter-weight to Muslim villains in television programs, especially when these characters remain underdeveloped and trapped in a loyalty paradox: that their defining characteristic, loyalty to "America" and fighting terrorism, is the one thing about them that can never be fully trusted. Their presence does not mean that portrayals of Islam and of Muslims are "balanced", as they reinforce the villainy of other Muslim characters by contrast, and – intentionally or not – help the programs to reinforce problematic political agendas such as the racial profiling and illegal detention of Muslim Americans.

CHAPTER SIX: THE FRIENDLY CULTURAL STEREOTYPE

Along with the "good" patriotic Muslim, another "positive" mode of performing Muslim-ness, the "Friendly Cultural Stereotype", is usually male, exclusively a person of colour, and a first-generation immigrant or visitor to the United States. Of the 288 characters included in this research, only 7 perform Muslim-ness as the "friendly cultural stereotype". Despite reflecting only 2% of the corpus, this remains an important trope of Muslim-ness as these are some of the most prominent "positive" portrayals of Muslims on American television, including Arastoo on the very popular and long-running series *Bones*, as well as *Aliens in America*'s Raja and *Whoopi*'s Nasim, who are notable as rare examples of Muslim main characters. The breakdown of characters included in this category is summarized in the following table:

	"Middle Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Total: 7	5	2	0	0	0	0
% of total	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%

In many ways, comedic programs that feature Muslim characters are sites of resistance to the other tropes: Muslim-ness as villainy, Muslim-ness as unquestioning patriotism, and Muslim-ness as victimhood. In comedies like *Whoopi, Aliens in America, Community,* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (a Canadian production not discussed in this work), "the story lines do *not* revolve around terrorism or homeland security" and characters "deviate from the standard patriot and victim molds" (Alsultany 2012: 176). However, in contrast to the popularity of counter-terror programs such as *24* and *Homeland*, most of the comedies discussed by Alsultany have not achieved popular success in the US (2012: 176). Shaheen has argued that one of the most important ways that popular culture can resist negative stereotypes about Muslims or Arabs is to portray them as regular people (2009/2001: 39), and the characters in these shows do live "varied lives" (Alsultany 2012: 176). Nevertheless, some of the Muslim characters are caricatures

(Alsultany 2012: 177). In addition to various positive elements of representation, these sitcoms also "contain elements of the stereotyping and simplified representations common to TV dramas", while also using absurd situations to expose racism (Alsultany 2012: 176). Even in satirizing racist perceptions that are invoked in the context of the "War on Terror", performances of the "friendly cultural stereotype" also reinforce these negative portrayals by reiterating and thus reinforcing them, even in jest. However, Morey and Yaqin also suggest that "challenges that work ironically with a knowledge of likely prejudices and then directly frustrate or confound them might have a role to play in loosening the grip of reductive images" (2011: 204). Furthermore, while we should not presume that more "diverse representations of Arab and Muslim identities" implies "a victory over racism" (Alsultany 2012: 176), it is important to see Muslim characters in contexts unrelated to terrorism, and Muslim characters in major roles (Alsultany 2012: 177). Developments such as these may help to construct the potential for still more diverse characterizations of Muslims in the future (Alsultany 2012: 177).

The "friendly cultural stereotype" is predominantly found in comedies, in the half-hour sit-com format. These characters reflect "positive" depictions in that the characters are not remotely villains, and instead are very friendly. However, these characters tend to be underdeveloped and retain foreignness as their main distinguishing feature and the source of their comedic impact. Nevertheless, they are also important because of their prominence and/or long-running presence. Because there are relatively few cases of the cultural stereotype, and because most are either a major character (Raja and Nasim) or a long-term recurring character (Arastoo), it is worthwhile to discuss each in turn and in depth. Of all the Muslim characters treated in this research, these three characters receive more screen time than most, along with

Darwyn on *Sleeper Cell* (see chapter five), Sayid on *Lost* (chapter eight)*,* and Abed on *Community* (chapter eight).

Aliens in America: *Raja*

The best example of Muslim-ness as friendly foreignness is Raja on *Aliens in America*. Raja is the punchline of the show. When Wisconsin family the Tolchuks sign up to host an exchange student, they expect someone like an attractive, athletic German student who will make young Justin Tolchuk cooler by association. Instead, they receive Raja, a Pakistani teenager. After spending the first episode fearing that he may be a terrorist and trying to send him home to Pakistan, the Tolchuks learn to appreciate Raja and his differences. Contrasting with the two teenage Tolchuks, Justin and his sister Claire, in almost every way, Raja's cultural differences are expressed in being respectful, polite, and helpful. However, Raja largely remains a caricature, a foreign oddity. He is seen as having strange ways, such as praying, not eating pork, treating adults with respect, and actually paying attention in school (S01E03). He follows rules to an extreme degree: not only does he scold other teenage boys for objectifying women they see on television (S01E03), he tells the Tolchuks that they should not skip commercials when watching television programs, as he argues that this is like stealing, because the ads pay for the programming (S01E11). Justin refers to him as "the most honourable kid in the world" (S01E04), and says that he raises the bar for moral behaviour for his host family (S01E11). Raja follows his moral code even when it gets him in trouble, including getting fired from his job at a convenience store for refusing to sell alcohol to minors (S01E05). He is also willing to throw himself on the proverbial grenade to protect the people he cares about, even when appearing to betray his own beliefs, such as when he tries to claim that Justin's pornography-browsing history

is his own (S01E03). He is a deeply devout and observant Muslim, and strictly observes prayer times, even at the airport, which causes him and the Tolchuks to be kicked off a flight (S01E14).

As discussed in chapter four, it is perceived as suspicious that young men should be interested in religion rather than girls, and as a red flag that can be indicative of a sexual repression or perversion that could make young men more likely to engage in terrorism (Alsultany 2012: 111). *Aliens in America* does reinforce this idea by quipping that Muslims' not dating until they are preparing for marriage is why a lot of young Muslim men are so "crabby" (S01E18). Raja's host mother expresses a desire to host a more "normal" boy who is interested in girls, and envies the Muslim family who did receive a German exchange student, who is interested in beer and girls (S01E14). As such, even through satire, the show reinforces negative perceptions of Muslims that are elsewhere conveyed through performances of Muslim-ness as villainy. However, Raja is also humanized when he reveals that although he pretends "to be above certain feelings because they are outside [his] faith", they are there; for example, he does get jealous about girls (S01E04). He is further humanized when he becomes irritable when trying to give up smoking, which he explains is very common in Pakistan (S01E07). He occasionally snaps at Justin, but usually apologizes for having behaved inappropriately (S01E06).

Even though the "War on Terror" is not part of the plot of the show, Raja's very existence invokes references to it. As Shaheen notes, *Aliens in America* "looks at Americans' post-9/11 fears and prejudices" (2008: 61). The show both reinforces and satirizes fear-mongering about Muslims. In the first episode, Justin Tolchuk has a conversation with his parents about wanting to "return him":

Mom: "What about the terrorist question?"

Dad: "Are you serious?!"

> Mom: "They pose as students, Gary. Bill O'Reilly said so. You need to watch more news."
>
> Dad: "It's Midora, Wisconsin."
>
> Mom: "Oh, so now Midora's not important enough to blow up? Where's your sense of civic pride?"
>
> Justin: "You know what, I hope he does blow up Midora, because my life could not get any worse." (S01E01)

The situation is laughable – at least for most viewers – specifically because the setting is small-town Wisconsin rather than LA, New York, or Washington, D.C., and because Raja is an awkward teenager. However, the idea of "sleeper cell" agents coming to infiltrate American society under the cover of students or families in order to attack it from within resonates with American fears of the War on Terror, and is a premise in shows that take this fear of embedded terrorists much more seriously, such as *24* and *Sleeper Cell*.

Aliens in America satirizes American ignorance about Muslims. On Raja's first day of school, the teacher introduces Raja as a "real, live Pakistani who practices Muslimism", and opens the floor to asking students how they feel about Raja and his differences, prompting students to express sentiments such as: "I guess I feel angry because his people blew up the buildings in New York", and silencing his attempts to explain that this is not true (S01E01). Later, Raja describes the students as being "like wolves, and so uneducated about world events" and says that the brochure promoting exchange students to come to the United States was "very misleading" (S01E01). *Aliens in America* also points out that most portrayals of Muslims are negative and reductionist, such as when the family assumes that Raja will be made uncomfortable by a fictional show called *Terror Cell*, he says: "Actually, I enjoy seeing people

such as myself on television, even when we are portrayed as one-dimensional supervillains" (S01E14). The show also provides an alternative presentation of mosques; in contrast with the ones presented in television dramas which give Mrs. Tolchuk "the willies", she finds a Wisconsin mosque to be not scary at all, although she is taken aback at the gendered separation of the mosque (S01E14). The show also pokes fun at irrational and hypocritical fears of Muslims, such as when a neighbour who is a registered sex offender says that Muslims like Raja are "not exactly the kind of thing you want in your community" (S01E15). The show also satirizes how even Americans who are sympathetic to but exoticize the Other are quite ignorant, such as when Justin makes Raja's waffles in the shape of camels as an "ode to Pakistan"; Raja graciously accepts the gesture but tells Justin that camels are actually from the Middle East, to which Justin indulgent asserts, with a smile: "I think you're wrong about that" (S01E12).

Like how Brody's family on *Homeland* finds the notion that he would have converted to Islam crazy and absurd, Raja's Muslim-ness is perceived as bizarre, as per Justin's description of seeing Raja pray for the first time: "This was the strangest thing I had ever seen in my house, and we had a clown die in our living room" (S01E01). However, Justin realizes that he and Raja are kindred spirits – although they are different from each other, they are both outsiders. Curious to learn more about Raja after Raja has listened to Justin's life story, Justin prays with him – to his mother's horror: "Why were you praying with that boy? … I'll tell you what you're not becoming, you're not becoming a Muslim" (S01E01). Justin assures her that he has no intention of becoming a Muslim, but that he likes Raja. His mother insists on sending Raja home, until she learns that he is recently orphaned and does not have much of a home to which he can return (S01E01). Not until Mrs. Tolchuk can see Raja as a boy that needs a home, and not a "Muslim", does she recognize his humanity and decide that he can stay (S01E01). Throughout the show the

Tolchuks often give Raja a hard time for what they perceive as stubbornness in his adherence to his beliefs, especially when it embarrasses Justin and Claire at school or causes the family to miss their vacation when Raja's airport prayer gets them banned from their flight (S01E14). However, Mrs. Tolchuk later feels ashamed of not doing more to make Raja feel welcome, after she meets a Muslim family that goes to great lengths to make their German exchange student feel welcome (S01E14).

Even with the hijinx that ensue in the sitcom format, Raja's Muslim-ness does provoke fear. When Raja buys supplies for "Rocket Club", he is accused of being a terrorist: a police officer notes that he raised red flags because of his "ethnic-religious what have you" (S01E03). He is treated suspiciously and, à propos of nothing, a teacher fearfully announces to Raja in the classroom: "I have a wife and two small boys who need a father" (S01E03). When the police want to search Raja's laptop, Justin defends Raja by saying that if he were a terrorist, he is smart enough to delete his browser history, prompting Raja to wearily remind everyone: "And also, I am not a terrorist" (S01E03). Although Justin makes a big show about defending Raja's civil rights, he is really trying to hide the fact the he, himself, was using Raja's laptop to look at pornography, and it remains uncertain whether Justin would have otherwise gone to bat to defend Raja's liberties. Like the patriotic "good" Muslims discussed above, Raja accepts the violation of his privacy and gives the police his computer in order to prove his innocence, because he is "tired at being looked at like a terrorist" (S01E03). The show provides insightful commentary on the punitive and dehumanizing effects of violating one's civil rights when the Tolchuks also have their family computer taken: "Suddenly it wasn't just Raja having his privacy invaded: it was all of us. We felt helpless and ashamed for no good reason" (S01E03). However, Justin has little genuine concern for Raja's privacy until his own rights are violated.

Fear of Raja's Muslim-ness also affects Justin's sister, who does not make the cheerleading team because the team is afraid that people will think they are "soft on terror" (S01E03). He is not even offended when she does not want to be seen in public with him (S01E03). Anyone else would be hurt and disillusioned by being perceived as dangerous by the whole school and even rejected by a member of his host family, but Raja takes it all in stride. He also reinforces the idea that Muslims are ignorant of American "values" such as freedom: "This whole freedom thing sounds wonderful, but it is such a headache" (S01E03). Thus, on the one hand the show reinforces the idea that there are reasons to fear Muslims in American society, if not Raja's presence in Wisconsin in particular and, although it is satire, it nevertheless continues to reinforce the idea of a connection between Muslims and terrorism.

Alsultany argues that "Raja is an offensively one-dimensional character: he speaks with an accent, wears traditional Pakistani clothing, has strange customs, and is very naive and square. He is a caricature" (2012: 172). Raja's differences are regularly emphasized: his "costume is merely there to remind viewers of his exotic provenance and raises few unsettling questions— male attire always being read more transparently than the semiotically loaded clothes of the Muslim female" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 201). However, Raja, like Nasim on *Whoopi,* is nevertheless notable as a rare example of a Muslim character in a leading role, and shows such as these play an important role in trying

> to diffuse post-9/11 tension about Muslims through humor, reveling in the ordinariness of daily life, reminding viewers of how much of life is *not* about terrorism, or September 11, but rather about petty squabbles, social anxieties, and the other mundane dilemmas of being human. (Alsultany 2012: 173; original emphasis)

Morey and Yaqin agree that *Aliens in America* "does tackle directly post-9/11 ignorance and fear of the cultural Other", but note that this is not the main focus of the show, which is more about (White) protagonist Justin's growing pains and coming-of-age while surviving the trials and tribulations of high school (2011: 201). It should also be noted that Justin is the only character who provides voice-overs and whose inner life we are able to experience directly. Morey and Yaqin argue that *Aliens in America* conveys a fairly superficial humanist message according to which "the funny Pakistani comes among 'us' and exposes 'our' prejudices but in the end turns out to be just like 'us'", but "misses a chance to go deeper into the labyrinth of modern cultural tensions" (2011: 202). In some ways, Raja illustrates both the tropes of the "good" Muslim and Muslim-ness as villainy: although he is uniformly and unquestioningly good, Raja cannot escape the stereotypes and assumptions that are imputed to Muslim villains.

Whoopi: *Nasim*

Like Raja, *Whoopi*'s Nasim, the Iranian handyman of the hotel in which the show is set, is often the target of jokes and satire about terrorism and racism. Alsultany argues that the role of Nasim is quite important: this was the first recurring role of an Iranian character on American television, and that he is a largely "humourous and likable character" (2012: 172). Furthermore, the show "challenges stereotypes and diffuses racial tension by using humour to accentuate stereotypes to demonstrate their absurdity" (Alsultany 2012: 172). The show is set in a post-9/11 climate and shows how Nasim's life has been affected by the "War on Terror" in absurd ways (Alsultany 2012: 172), even though he is a hotel handyman and has no direct engagement with terror or counter-terror. Like *Aliens in America*, *Whoopi*'s portrayal of Nasim satirizes and provides commentary on the "War on Terror" and reductionist perceptions of Muslims, but it also reinforces these connections through repeated association.

Nasim is a caricature of a buffoon. Like everyone else where he works, he is not very good at his job and is not well-suited to working in customer service: when he is promoted to the position of concierge, he quits because the guests are too "needy" and ask "stupid" questions such as when is the check-out time and where is the elevator (S01E01). He is a very flamboyantly dramatic and over-the-top character who makes many references to his experiences with the Iranian regime, including absurd analogies such as likening someone breathing down his neck at work to state violence: "I haven't felt so oppressed since the Ayatollah blew up my beach house" (S01E01).

Whoopi also makes fun of the inability of many Americans to tell the difference between different ethnic groups, especially of the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Nasim is very offended when people mistake him for an Arab, although main character and his boss Mavis Rae does not think that this is a big deal: "Hell no I can't tell the difference! All you people look alike to me!" (S01E01). The show challenges the conflation of all Middle Easterners as both Arabs and Muslims by featuring a specifically Iranian character, in contrast with more common portrayals of Muslims in shows like *24* that either fictionalize or avoid naming countries, sometimes also leaving ambiguity as to whether the country is meant to stand in for an Arab country and/or possibly for Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, or Pakistan. These ambiguities suggest that the details do not matter, and presume that all brown-skinned Muslims are interchangeable. It also provides insightful commentary about racial profiling and American hysteria about terrorism. For example, when the day's terror alert level is "orange", Nasim says: "Why doesn't the government just say what it really means and just make it a 'Brown' alert? Or, simpler, an 'Arab' alert. Look for all Brown men, even Persians who look a tiny bit Arab" (S01E02). Nasim resents being racially profiled, although this is more about his disdain for being mistaken for an

Arab than about the security repercussions. The potential for providing meaningful or subversive commentary on American ignorance about Muslims is undercut by Nasim's own (satirical) ignorance and racism. He is upset about being mistaken for an Arab because he himself is prejudiced against Arabs. Reinforcing various stereotypes, "sneaky Arabs" are contrasted with "lazy Persians" (S01E12). When someone voices the perception that Arabs do not listen to women, Nasim is offended not by the accusation of misogyny, but by being called an Arab (S01E01). When Mavis tells him that he needs to realize that "people here don't know the difference between Persians and Arabs and frankly they don't care", Nasim asserts that "we do in Iran, we care very much" (S01E02). As such, Nasim is not opposed to racial profiling, but feels that this should only apply to Arabs, and is only offended because he feels that he is erroneously included in this group. When Mavis tells Nasim that she is indeed scared by "his" people and that when she sees a few of "you guys on an airplane, I'm off", he does not challenge this ignorance, but rather reinforces it with his own unexplained prejudices: "You know, I hear you. I feel exactly the same way about the Portuguese" (S01E01).

Like in many other narratives of lateral violence, Nasim – who is himself marginalized and treated with suspicion – complains that the "problem" with America is that "they let anybody in" (S01E01), using language similar to that which other Americans might use to describe him. Nasim also yells "Hey! Go back to where you came from!" when he is cut off while driving (S01E16). Nasim is unable to tell the difference between Chinese and Japanese people, but does not see the irony of this and his frustrations at the inability of others to tell Middle Easterners apart (S01E02). Of course, although it is problematic in how it is performed, Nasim's ignorance also holds up a mirror to the audience and the ignorance of Westerners about Arabs, Iranians, Muslims, and other minority groups.

Similarly to *Aliens in America*, by featuring a Brown-skinned Muslim character, *Whoopi* cannot avoid addressing issues of racial profiling in airports. Contrasting his experiences with those of another character who is afraid of flying, Nasim discusses his own experiences:

You're afraid of flying; I'm still afraid of airports. You know, security is gone insane. You know, they say 'Where are you going? What is the purpose of your trip?' If I say 'Business,' they take me to the little room; if I say pleasure, I go to the little room. And then they bring out the dreaded plastic gloves. You know they're actually allowed to search inside of you? I tell you, you're not going to find Bin Laden in there. (S01E13)

With jokes about interrogations and cavity searches, *Whoopi* simultaneously questions and makes light of the violations of the rights of Muslims and Arabs – and those who are perceived as such – in the context of the tightened security measures of the War on Terror.

As the Tolchuks on *Aliens in America* discover that Raja is really not so different from themselves, the two main characters on *Whoopi* have much more in common that might be expected between a Black woman who runs a hotel and is a failed musical artist who produced a one-hit wonder (Mavis Rae, played by Whoopi Goldberg), and Nasim, her Iranian handyman. Both have a flair for the dramatic. Much of their bond is over Nasim's love for Mavis's music, and the two often dance together, as Nasim can never resist the beat (S01E01; S01E04; S01E06). Although the two constantly take jabs at and insult each other, it is clear that they share a close bond, such as when Nasim is touched by Mavis's admission that she considers Nasim as a friend and family (S01E04). *Whoopi* also provides general social and political commentary on the George W. Bush administration (S01E06) and hypocritical double standards contrasting the United States and the Middle East in terms of values and moralities. For example, Nasim argues that "there are more executions in Texas than the Middle East, it's like … the Taliban with

barbecue" (S01E11). The show critiques narratives of American democracy, such as when Mavis' brother assures Nasim that President Bush will bring democracy to Iran, prompting Mavis to quip: "That's right, Nasim. And if it works in Iran, he's going to try it here" (S01E17).

Whoopi also addresses systemic racism targeting Black Americans, such as an episode highlighting how Mavis – a Black woman – is followed around and treated suspiciously anytime she is in a store (S01E09), and commentary on police brutality, as when Nasim says to a police officer: "Look here, I'm not a Black man, you can't beat me for no reason" (S01E12). However, there are also instances of reinforcing the notion of the Middle East and Muslims as barbaric, such as the following disconcerting quip by Nasim: "You know, my cousin had a mock stoning. At least that's what they said before they started" (S01E11). Nasim also satirizes and reinforces notions of the Middle East as a violent and war-torn place, reflecting on his childhood that was full of "games and small motor repair and – when there was ammunition – gunplay" (S01E17). The show also reinforces other racist narratives, such as in Mavis' quip about cab drivers: "I'm all for immigration, but we got to give them a copy of the Constitution and some deodorant" (S01E06).

However, the show also questions presumptions about Muslims as uptight and homophobic; not only is Nasim very flamboyant and will start dancing anywhere, he also comfortably asserts that Barry Manilow is "hot" and agrees with a surprised reaction that he is comfortable with his sexuality (S01E13). Nasim also reminds the audience that "his" culture has contributed much to the world that has been appropriated by the West, including in the realms of mathematics and pharmaceuticals (S01E14). In addition to Nasim's friendly relationship with Mavis that reinforces the idea that "we" are not so different from each other, Nasim eventually strikes up a romantic relationship with the maid Jadwiga (S01E21), with whom he had

apparently been in conflict all season, but it turns out that their insults were how they expressed their liking for each other.

Nasim's off-colour remarks and the ways in which he is treated by others satirize portrayals of Muslims as backwards and as terrorists. However, not only does this satirical commentary reiterate and thus reinforce – even if unintentionally – negative stereotypes, the ignorant racist jokes peppered throughout the show also undermine its potential to be subversive and critical of racial discrimination in the context of the "War on Terror".

Bones: *Arastoo Vaziri*

Bones's Arastoo Vaziri starts out as a friendly cultural stereotype. When his character is first introduced, Arastoo's plot revolves largely around his foreignness and the discomfort and confusion of his co-workers about his customs, such as praying five times a day (including interrupting work to do so) and not drinking alcohol. The very first shot introducing the character of Arastoo shows him on a prayer rug with his shoes off (S04E17). His superior, protagonist Temperance Brennan, opines that his appointment will not likely work out, as his prayer schedule will disrupt their work, and maligns the rules of religious tolerance that prevent her from firing him outright (S04E17). Like Raja on *Aliens in America*, Arastoo's Muslim-ness often feels like a caricature and the punchline of a joke, such as when his watch beeps for prayer time, and he exclaims: "Ooh. Time out for Allah!" (S04E17). Co-workers make jokes at Arastoo's expense based on his Muslim-ness and attentiveness to daily prayer: "And, uh, just so you know, Arastoo is praying again. Either that, or he's doing a very repetitive yoga move" (Hodgins, S04E17). Racialized stereotypes are raised in relation to Arastoo, such as one character quipping that his accent is "thicker than Achmed the rug merchant", and then worriedly asking: "Was that racist? It sounded racist" (Booth, S05E04). In another instance, he is pulled over by a police

officer in what appears to be a racially-motivated incident (S09E02). His co-workers prey upon his prayer habits to express their frustration with him and his over-eagerness in his work: "How's about you go bank a prayer and give me some breathing space?" (Camille Saroyan, S04E17). However, his superior responsible for this hurtful quip also defends his right to pray in the lab, or wherever he pleases (S04E17).

Because he is an observant Muslim, his co-workers assume that he will be socially conservative and espouse backwards views such as homophobia (S04E17), which is reminiscent of the trope of the Muslim villain as homophobic and a failed heterosexual. Like Raja on *Aliens in America*, Arastoo is an excessively kind, compassionate, and understanding Muslim "nice guy" who treats others graciously even after his reception is less than cordial. For example, in the episode in which Arastoo is introduced (S04E17), a female co-worker is going through a breakup with her girlfriend; despite being aggressively presumed of disapproving of a same-sex relationship, Arastoo's response is to make the co-worker a mixed CD of songs he finds cathartic to ease a broken heart, and wishes her the best in finding love (S04E17). The co-worker is moved; she thanks and hugs Arastoo, who appears a bit surprised but pleased by the acceptance of his gesture (S04E17).

Correctly anticipating that his co-workers will not understand his dual commitment to both science and religion, at first Arastoo fakes a "foreign" accent in the hope that they will take his religious views for granted as a product of his culture. He accidentally reveals the falseness of his accent in an outburst caused by his superior's excessive concern that, as a Muslim, he would be bothered by handling pig bones: "I'm a scientist, OK? Just like the rest of you. I can deal. So please just back off and let me do my job like anyone else" (S05E04). His colleagues are bemused to learn that he was faking an accent, and admit that racist stereotypes inform their gut

reactions: "At first I go where everyone else goes, you know – terrorist", but also admit that this explanation does not make sense either: "Wouldn't a terrorist fake *not* having an accent?" (Camille Saroyan, S05E04). Although most colleagues settle on assuming that Arastoo is crazy or, at best, weird, the office "shrink" understands that he was motivated by frustration with the frequent inability of others to reconcile his dual identity as a man of science and as a man of faith (S05E04). Arastoo explains: "When I speak as though I just got off the boat, people accept my religious convictions. Plus, fewer terrorist jokes. I don't know why" (S05E04). Confirming his initial suspicion that his colleagues will give him a hard time for his Muslim-ness, he is forced to have this conversation:

> Hodgins: How do you balance an archaic religious belief with a life devoted to science?
>
> Arastoo: This discussion is exactly what I hoped to avoid. (*scoffs/sighs*) There's no conflict between Allah and science. Allah created the mystery of the world, and science struggles, and mostly fails, to explain it. But the search for truth is honorable, and I honor Allah through the search for truth.
>
> Hodgins: I get that. But what's with the 'Kill the infidel' routine?
>
> Arastoo: (*wry laugh*) It's times like these I wish I drank alcohol. (S05E04)

As such, Arastoo also reflects the trope of the "Good" Muslim who explains Islam and what it means to be Muslim to both other characters and the viewer. Hodgins illustrates American ignorance about Muslims and the unavoidable tendency to presume links between Muslim-ness and radical views associated with terrorism. Like Darwyn, Arastoo also encourages others to pursue forgiveness instead of vengeance when they have been wronged (S09E11).

Like Raja, although Arastoo is the very essence of kindness and thoughtfulness, his presence provokes references to perceived connections between Muslim-ness and terrorism.

Arastoo is accused of being sympathetic to terrorism (S04E24) and presumed to perceive America and Americans as the "Great Satan" (S05E14). He defends his "love" for the United States (S05E14), and confides in Camille Saroyan (his boss and eventual love interest) about his traumatic experiences serving as a translator in Iraq, including when he had to kill an insurgent to protect his unit, but perceived the devil not only in the other man's eyes, but in himself when he pulled the trigger (S05E14).

Although the character of Arastoo primarily reflects the trope of the friendly cultural stereotype and eventually manages to become a "regular" character with many traits beyond *not* being a terrorist, this is made possible by satisfying the trope of the patriotic "good" Muslim early in his character arc. Although the show's plot has nothing to do with counter-terrorism, Arastoo has to perform his loyalty to the United States and prove that he is not an irrational hater of the West and the US: he verbally confirms that he "loves" the United States, and earns additional credibility by revealing himself to have served with (presumably American) forces in Iraq, not only as a translator[15], but also rising to the occasion of participating in combat and killing "insurgents" in order to protect others (S05E14). Although he also expresses appreciation for his country (Iran) and his culture, aside from the politics (S10E13), he regularly expresses his love for the United States, noting: "I remember the first morning I woke up as a citizen. It meant everything to me" (S10E06). Arastoo gradually earns the acceptance and respect of his co-workers – even prickly protagonist Dr. Brennan – and eventually succeeds in having episode plots that have nothing to do with his Muslim-ness, such as the excitement and heartbreak of nearly having his work published in an academic journal (S07E09). However, Arastoo never fully shakes the centrality of Muslim-ness to his character and still occasionally has to pay his

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[15] It is not explicitly stated that Arastoo speaks Arabic (his mother tongue is Farsi), but it is certainly possible that he speaks Arabic in addition to Farsi and English.

dues in affirming his rejection of Islamic terrorism and his love for America. For example, even nearly four seasons (and the tenth episode featuring Arastoo) after his introduction, Arastoo is still placed in an uncomfortable position when the topic of terrorism comes up: when studying a victim who appears to have been fatally injured at the Pentagon on 9/11, Arastoo is asked if it is difficult for him to be involved in the case because he shares the same religion as the attackers (S08E06). Elsewhere maligning that he is often perceived as representing all Muslims (S09E02), Arastoo resents the assumptions and generalizations that Americans make about Islam and Muslims, and argues about Christianity's role in the Crusades, the Inquisition, and slavery (S08E06). Echoing sentiments expressed by Darwyn on *Sleeper Cell*, Arastoo asserts:

> This was not the work of religion. It was arrogance. It was hypocrisy. It was hate. Those
> horrible men who hijacked those planes hijacked my religion that day, too. They insulted
> my God. So, no, this isn't difficult. It's a privilege to able to serve this victim, to show
> him the care and love that was so absent that day. (S08E06)

In sum, even in contexts that generally have nothing to do with the "War on Terror", counter-terrorism, or politics in any way, "good" Muslims – even those that more closely reflect the friendly cultural stereotype than the über-patriotic Muslim-American counter-terror agent – must explicitly perform their rejection of terrorism.

Nevertheless, relations between Arastoo and his co-workers are gradually normalized as his colleagues at the Jeffersonian realize they have more in common than they thought, and that Arastoo is not so different after all. In a relationship reminiscent of the "buddy" trope, Hodgins is at first hostile to Arastoo, implying that he is sexist and homophobic (S04E17) and that, as a Muslim, he would support terrorism (S04E24). However, once he realizes that he and Arastoo share a love and knowledge of sports – once they find common ground – their relationship

becomes normalized and the two bond as friends in a stereotypically "masculine" way, and Hodgins even affectionately calls Arastoo "Our All-American Muslim" (S05E19). Although the result is Arastoo's acceptance as a friend and colleague, this dynamic is still worthy of scrutiny as Hodgins is unable to relate or even act civilly towards Arastoo until Arastoo performs an identity that is compatible with American masculinity: being an athlete and knowledgeable of sports trivia. Once this has been established, Hodgins and Arastoo are able to act as "buddies" without Arastoo's Muslim-ness being raised (S06E05), whereas Arastoo's story in every episode up to this point revolved around carefully negotiating his Muslim-ness with his co-workers.

It is regularly reiterated that Arastoo's brand of Islam is of a non-threatening variant. This is made clear in the episode "The Murder in the Middle East" (S10E19), which takes place in Tehran. Arastoo is kidnapped by Majid Namazi, a corrupt MP who uses his wealth and power to kidnap Arastoo and force him to solve his son's murder (S10E19). Namazi loses interest in solving the murder after he learns that his son was not as pious as he thought, and broke religious law by drinking alcohol and engaging in a pre-marital romantic relationship with a foreign woman (S10E19). The deceased is also described to have advocated for women's rights and free speech, something of which his father would be ashamed, according to his cousin. The deceased's cousin, police officer Sanjar Zaamani, also vows that he follows Islamic law and maligns the fact that Iranian youth are more commonly drinking alcohol, a practice that he blames on American TV (S10E19). When Arastoo is appalled by Namazi's rejection of his (deceased) son, Namazi says that Arastoo is also a "disgrace" in "the eyes of Allah" for his own pre-marital relationship with an American woman (Cam). Cam defends Arastoo's identify as a "good" Muslim, pointing to his adherence to religious laws such as "prayers, fasting, [and] giving to the needy" (S10E19). She says that Arastoo has only ever committed "acts of defiance"

in the "name of love". Arastoo's behaviour is also regularly shown to be above reproach according to American sensibilities, as he is uncommonly kind, and his main "violation" of religious law – premarital sex within the context of a loving and committed long-term monogamous relationship – is well within the norm of mainstream Western society. In contrast with the strict and judgmental Islam of the Iranian characters we meet in this episode, Arastoo quotes a passage of the Qur'an that emphasizes the importance of not judging others; Booth, who is American and Christian, chimes in, agreeing that "Only God is allowed to judge. Our job is to show compassion and mercy" (S10E19). As such, Arastoo's Muslim-ness is confirmed to be compatible with a (Christian) American morality and worldview, but this is made possible through distinguishing him from other "backwards" Muslims.

Arastoo also occasionally embodies the exoticism of the East; as his character becomes more developed, it is revealed that he is also a poet and has had a book of poems published in Farsi (S08E07). Most of his co-workers do not understand Farsi, but are awed at the sound of them and his apparent poetic prowess. A love poem for Camille Saroyan, his boss, is also central to starting (or deepening) a romantic relationship (S08E07). This also allows Arastoo to perform his belonging in "Western" culture as he reveals that he is a political exile because his secular poetry about "love, freedom, democracy, sex" forced him to flee the country before he would be arrested (S08E07). A trip to Iran also seems to confirm much of what other people assume about its backwardness, including shots of anti-US graffiti and a corrupt MP asserting that because he and Cam are not married, they should be arrested for kissing in public (S10E19). Cam also expresses concern that pre-marital sex is allegedly punished by one hundred lashes, but Arastoo says that punishment is "rarely" enforced – a caveat that does not soothe Cam's concern (S10E19). Arastoo's relationship with Cam adds a deeply romantic side to his already

established traits of kindness, thoughtfulness, and defensiveness towards those who misunderstand his faith. He is further shown to be stoic and selfless when he is infected by a pathogen and prioritizes finding a cure for others over his own survival (S08E23).

In sum, Arastoo performs various tropes of the "good" Muslim, such as in affirming his love and loyalty for the United States, his embracing of Western "liberal" values, his rejection of Middle Eastern political regimes, and his definitive condemnation of terrorism. However, he is also distinct from other "good" Muslims as his plot arc actually has nothing to do with counter-terrorism or the "War on Terror", even though his very Muslim-ness cannot help but to raise associations with the tropes of the Muslim terrorist. Furthermore, the question of Arastoo's loyalty is relatively minor, and his Muslim-ness is raised mostly in terms of his coworkers' perception of him as a foreign oddity, and bemusement at his "strange" ways, such as praying regularly and abstaining from alcohol. Like Raja, his character arc revolves around others gradually realizing that he is really not so different from "us", once they get to know him. His relationship with Cam also helps to transition his character from being a "friendly cultural stereotype" into a well-rounded character, with plot points that revolve around various aspects of his career and personal life – character development of a kind that is rarely seen for the patriotic "good" Muslim discussed above.

Conclusion

Comedy more easily opens a space in which it is possible to resist prevailing trends and negative representations of Muslims (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 204), and most of the shows which perform Muslim-ness as a "friendly cultural stereotype" are comedic sitcoms such as *Aliens in America* and *Whoopi*.[16] *Bones*, which features Arastoo as a recurring character, is a procedural

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[16] Although the Canadian program *Little Mosque on the Prairie* falls outside the scope of this research, it would be an interesting site at which to explore further performances of "Muslim-ness" as the "friendly cultural stereotype".

drama about anthropologists and scientists who solve murders; while not a sitcom, it also has little to do with the "War on Terror" or questions of American foreign policy.

Although bearing some similarities to the "good" Muslim in terms of being "positive" forms of representation, the "friendly cultural stereotype" is also different in a number of ways. In one sense, their trajectories are similar but opposite: while the "good" Muslim may be considered part of the team until their Muslim-ness casts doubt on their loyalty (e.g. Danny Galvez, *Homeland*; Nadia Yassir, *24*), the "friendly cultural stereotype" starts out as a foreign oddity, but eventually proves that they are not so different from "us". However, this might be considered an encouraging starting point from which audiences might not be too threatened by the Muslim "Other", but from which Muslim characters might see further development, such as how Arastoo on *Bones* gradually becomes a more complex character. Unlike the "good" Muslim whose loyalty can never be fully trusted, the "friendly cultural stereotype" *can* become accepted by their peers, whether they are welcomed into an American family such as Raja on *Aliens in America* or become accepted by their colleagues and an American love interest, such as Arastoo on *Bones*. Nevertheless, like all Muslims in American programs who are marked as essentially "Other" by their inescapable Muslim-ness, the "friendly cultural stereotype" also remains plagued by jokes and accusations of terrorism, and must regularly reiterate their love for America and Western values, lest they be seen as threatening.

CHAPTER SEVEN: MUSLIM-NESS AS VICTIMHOOD

Another trope of Muslim-ness is that of victimhood. This category is largely split according to gender. There are two main subcategories: 1) victims of patriarchal Islam and Islamic terrorism, and 2) victims of discrimination and/or harassment in the West. As Alsultany notes, "the Muslim" is often perceived as "either a terrorist or a victim in need of rescue by the United States" (2012: 35). There is a surprising recurrence of Muslims cast sympathetically as victims of unjust hatred, suspicion, discrimination, and/or harassment (2012: 3). One of the most famous examples of this is *The West Wing*'s explicit response to the events of September 11th, 2001 (S03E01, "Isaac and Ishmael, first aired October 3, 2001), in which a Muslim character, who appears only in this episode, is unjustly treated with suspicion. Similar examples can be found in *"The Practice, Boston Public, Law and Order, Law and Order SVU, NYPD Blue, 7th Heaven,* [and] *The Education of Max Bickford"* (Alsultany 2012: 3).

Of the 58*[17] characters who perform Muslim-ness as victimhood, 41 are victims of "bad Muslims": patriarchal and misogynist Muslim "culture" and/or Muslim terrorists. If we consider only gender, we have 22 females and 19 males; however, if you consider women and children/youths together, this number becomes 32 (22 females, including 2 youths, and 10 male youths), in contrast with 9 adult males. Of the 20 adult women, nearly half (9) are victims of sexual and/or spousal violence. Victims of Western discrimination, racial profiling, and/or harassment include 11 characters, of which only two are female. Another subcategory, victims of Western interference or casualties of the "War on Terror" (such as the assets of intelligence agents who are killed due to cooperation with the CIA), includes nine characters, three of which are women. As such, when "Muslim-ness" is the "cause" of victimhood, female individuals account for over half of the victims; women combined with youths (24%) account for over 75%.

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[17] Numbers add up to 61 because three characters are cross-listed.

However, males account for 75% of victims of the "West". Of the 58 victims, 56, or 97% are "Middle-Eastern", with only one White man and one White woman among the "victims". These numbers are illustrated below:

	Male	Male – Youth	Female	Female – Youth	**TOTALS**
Western Discrimination/Racial Profiling	8	1	2	0	**11**
Western Interference	3	3	3	0	**9**
"Bad" Muslims	9	10	20	2	**41**
(Spousal or sexual abuse)			(9)		
TOTALS	**20**	**14**	**25**	**2**	**61**

There are 58 individual characters who perform the trope of Muslim-ness as victimhood, but the totals in this chart add up to 61 because three characters – male youths – are cross-listed as being both victims of Western interference and "bad" Muslims. For example, *Homeland*'s Issa Nazir was killed, along with many other children, in an American drone strike on a school. However, Issa was also the son of notorious terrorist leader Abu Nazir. Elsewhere (S04E01), characters on *Homeland* attribute civilian casualties of drone strikes as truly being the responsibility of terrorists: they endanger civilians by their proximity and by their terrorism, which is truly the root cause of the drone strikes. The interesting dynamic here is that although there are more male than female victims overall, male victims are over-represented in the categories of Western Discrimination/Racial Profiling and Western Interference, but outnumbered by women and youths when it comes to being victims of "bad" Muslim men – which includes both Muslim victims of terrorism and of abusive spouses and/or sexual violence.

It is important to note that in the three other tropes of Muslim-ness – the Muslim villain, the "Good" Muslim, and the Friendly Cultural Stereotype – most characters are male. The only

exception within those three categories is the subcategory of the White convert terrorist, in which White women account for five of eleven individuals. Among those of "Middle Eastern" origin, Muslim women account for only 12 of 103 villains. Furthermore, despite the relative parity when considering the total number of male and female Muslims who perform victimhood (who are nearly exclusively racialized as "brown" or "Middle Eastern" bodies), representations of Muslim women are concentrated in the category of victims: 45% (26 of 58) of "Middle Eastern" Muslim women are victims, whereas only 15% (30 of 200) "Middle Eastern" men perform victimhood. Thus, "Middle Eastern" women are three times more likely than their male counterparts to be portrayed as victims.

While network executives, show creators, writers, directors, and casting agents are motivated by myriad factors that influence storytelling decisions, television programs are not produced in a vacuum, and reflect and (re)produce overarching societal narratives of how the West narratively constructs Muslim women. There is a strong tendency to racialize and label women of colour who originate from Muslim cultures as passive victims, which is demonstrated in performances of Muslim-ness as victimhood: the majority of Muslim characters who are victims of patriarchal Muslim men and Islamic terrorism are women and children of "Middle Eastern" origin. (Recall that the programs studied loosely construct the "Middle East" as a relatively homogenous region, and collapse ethnic, cultural, and religious groups from North Africa to South Asia into a more or less monolithic "Muslim" identity.) Shaheen notes that Arab-American women are rarely portrayed in American cinema or television, but that when they do appear, they are usually "silent and submissive" or wild and repressed, and never appear as regular people (2008: 47).

Zaatari also notes the contrasting tropes of portraying Muslim women as oppressed or as "exotic belly dancers" (2011: 71), although even the latter trope also implies submission to the will of patriarchal Muslim men. In contrast, White and Western women are more typically narratively constructed as "liberated". White Muslim women are portrayed as villains or terrorists, and have more agency than their "Middle Eastern" counterparts, who are primarily portrayed as passive victims. White Muslim women account for only 7 of 277 Muslim characters; five (71%) are terrorists. Because White women are more "liberated", when they are "radicalized", they perform Muslim-ness in ways that are typically masculinised and demonstrate their agency, like their male terrorist counterparts.

Alsultany argues that it is possible to find more complex Muslim villains, but that complex victims are hard to find; victims remain overwhelmingly exemplified by the trope of the "Muslim woman who is brutalized by a patriarchal culture and needs to be saved" (2012: 71). This trope remains popular because it is very effective in its ability to provoke pity, outrage, and an "excess of affect" (Alsultany 2012: 72). Beyond the racialized assumptions that tend to assume that Muslim women are victims of their religion, their culture, and their misogynist and patriarchal men, the very trope of victimhood negates the prospect of complexity. As Beier notes, vulnerability is based in unequal power relationships that deny the agency of victims and reduces them to subjects in need of protection (2015b: 241).

The twin tropes of the violent, misogynist Muslim man and the passive and victimized Muslim woman are co-constituted. Shepherd reminds us that "gender and violence are mutually constitutive of identities" and of each other (2012: x), and are performatively constituted (2012: 6) through practices of power (2012: 7). As Razack notes: "Globally, while Muslim men have been the target of an intense policing, Muslim women have been singled out as needing

protection from their violent and hyper-patriarchal men" (2008: 4). Because of this co-constitutive relationship, Arab-American feminists have noted that it is difficult to discuss patriarchy in Muslim societies without at the same time reinforcing racist stereotypes about Muslims (Naber 2011: 89) and adding "ideological fuel" to the "War on Terror" (Razack 2008: 107). Of course, it is important to remember that *all* women – including but not limited to Muslim women – "*are* imperilled in patriarchy", although "the rise of conservative Islam" does further harm the positions and opportunities of women, along with the rise of conservatism among other religious groups, including within Christianity and Hinduism (Razack 2008: 17; original emphasis).

Works of fiction do not exist in a vacuum, isolated from the broader socio-political context. Representations of Muslim women as victims in need of saving have been important in discourses legitimizing American policies of intervention and heightened security as part of the "War on Terror". For the US military, "saving Muslim women is a compelling way to gain support for military intervention", as "combating terrorism requires 'liberating' Muslim women and punishing those responsible: namely, Muslim men or a 'barbaric' Islamic culture more generally" (Alsultany 2012: 73). Television programs and other media participate in this by producing an "excess of affect for oppressed Muslim women" (Alsultany 2012: 16). Whether intended by show creators or not, portrayals of women as victims of "Islam" play a role in informing this broader political context and its pervasive power relations.

Rhetoric about "saving" Muslim women is particularly powerful because it is both abstract and affective (Abu-Lughod 2013: 82), allowing us to make powerful generalizations, while also exploring specific cases in gratuitous and graphic detail, such as in the very popular genre of writing about captive and abused women, which Abu-Lughod calls "Pulp Nonfiction"

(2013: 87). Following the established traditions of "gendered Orientalism" and sexualized writing about the oppression of Muslim women, stories about abused Muslim women started to gain popularity in the 1990s and became even more prominent after 9/11, reveling in themes of force and bondage (Abu-Lughod 2013: 87-8). Coercion and the absence of consent, choice, and freedom (Abu-Lughod 2013: 91) reinforce "the new common sense about rescuing women" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 82). Kahf also discusses the hot commodity of publications about Muslim women which present two tropes: "the Muslim woman as Victim, and its flip side, the Escaped Muslim woman" (2011: 111). The "Victim-Escapee narrative" is advanced by what Kahf calls the "neo-Orientalist Pity Committee" which promotes, "at every level of culture, pop to high" the hegemonic "Truth" that "Islam is exceptionally, uniquely, inherently evil to women" (2011: 112). A famous example is the work of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who relays a narrative of escaping oppressive Islam, and reinforces the notion of a clear civilizational distinction between the "East" and the "West" (Alsultany 2012: 85). Abu-Lughod argues that Hirsi Ali's personal narrative also reflects "a compulsive repetition of a formula that [...] generalizes about what Islam means and does to people", which promotes "a strangely decontextualized and ahistorical view of religion" and "pits the enlightened and free West against backward and enslaved Muslim societies" (2013: 110). As discussed above, such narratives often come into play elsewhere in social and political life, and so they are particularly successful when they "align with U.S. foreign policy and consumerism, or at least with the war on terror" (Kahf 2011: 112).

One example of the pop culture trope of the Victim-Escapee narrative is the early 1990s film *Not Without my Daughter*, a "classic of anti-Islam hysteria" that uses many of the same tropes to imply the villainy of Muslim men discussed in chapter four, such as overlaying the call to prayer with oppressive practices like wife beating, thus implying a causal connection between

Islam or Muslim-ness and abusive misogyny (Kahf 2011: 117). In my own experience, I was earnestly referred to and provided a copy of the 1987 book of the same name to dissuade me when I expressed interest in an undergraduate student exchange to Lebanon, notwithstanding the fact the memoir is set in Iran and about an abusive Iranian husband. Aside from reflecting a sweeping generalization about men from the region as "dangerous", this provides yet another illustration of the conflation of "Arab" and "Muslim" (Jarmakani 2011: 237) and that all Muslim or "Middle Eastern" men are assumed to be the same.

So-called "honour killings" are also a hot topic that underscores "*their* barbarism" in contrast with "*our* civility". For example, participation in the "honour killing" of a teenage girl on the grounds of going to parties and dating American boys efficiently establishes the backwardness and villainy of *Sleeper Cell*'s primary antagonist in the very first episode. While "honour killings" are certainly abhorrent and worthy of attention, this framing reinforces narratives of "civilizational" differences, and neglects the fact that violence against women – most often spousal or familial – is a widespread problem throughout the world, including in all Western countries. For example, in Britain, "two women are murdered by their partners every week" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 72), and in Canada, every six days a woman is killed by her partner (Canadian Women's Foundation 2015). As Morey and Yaqin note, how issues like "honour killings" are reported on "always ends up transcending the local parameters of the case in question, as often-tenuous connections are claimed to the wide 'Muslim issues' of terrorism, the mistreatment of women, and a perceived incompatibility with Western family values" (2011: 44). This causes "honour killings" to be painted as a "Muslim issue" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 71) which confirms *their* status as outsiders (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 72). These gender-based crimes are implicitly linked to *their* backwardness, reinforcing stereotypes and the notion of

civilizational differences that make such misogynistic practices possible, along with terrorism (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 75). Because "honour crimes" are associated with "culture" as not merely the context, but the *cause* of this violence, narratives and coverage of "honour crimes" stigmatize "not particular acts of violence but entire cultures or communities", reinforcing prevailing perceptions of Muslim communities as "backward and prone to violence" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 114). "Honour crimes" are treated differently from other forms of gender-based violence, including high rates of domestic violence and sexual assault in Western countries, because "violent or abusive behavior gets attributed to culture only when it occurs in minority or alien cultural, racial, or national groups" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 127, referencing Volpp).

Orientalism involves treating Muslim societies as frozen in time outside of modernity: portraying "honour crimes" as uniform and "timeless cultural practices" while ignoring other contextual details helps to promote this (Abu-Lughod 2013: 128). Representing Muslim communities as homogenous and backwards also reinforces, by contrast, certain values as belonging exclusively to the West, such as "individualism, freedom, humanity, tolerance, and liberalism" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 128). Contrasting Muslim "crimes of honour" with Western "crimes of passion" frame the former as a cultural problem and the latter as an individual problem, thus reflecting and reinforcing racialized assumptions (Razack 2008: 128). This is also a reminder of the need for intersectionality, as "gender" issues are inextricably entwined with issues of "race" and "culture". Razack reminds us that "[r]acism complicates a long-standing sexism" (2008: 142), and violence and oppression of Muslim women is far from the only instance of the intersection of racism and sexism. Other salient examples include victim-blaming of Aboriginal women in Canada (Razack 2008: 143) which is related to a colonial context, and reduced attention to physical and sexual violence against Black women in the American media

and legal system (e.g. see Crenshaw 1989), which is in turn tied to a long history of negative and dehumanizing portrayals of Black women (seminal works include Davis 1981; hooks 1981; Crenshaw 1989; Crenshaw 1991).

(Un)Veiling the Muslim Woman

Clothing is central to performing female modes of Muslim-ness, and visible markers of Muslim-ness such as the *hijab* or *niqab* not only make the Muslim woman hyper-visible (Razack 2008: 107), but are "semiotically loaded" (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 201) and draw on more complex narratives of the "imperilled Muslim woman" and the "dangerous Muslim man", who are among Razack's allegorical figures of the "War on Terror" and "clash of civilizations" (2008: 5). Not only are these figures prominent in our storytelling through pop culture, they are also central in the news media, such as the recent *niqab* debate in the 2015 Canadian Federal election (see Hamilton 2015), or Trump's rhetoric about keeping Muslims out of the United States (e.g. Berman 2015). For example, the "Sharia debate" in Canada is framed as an issue of the "pre-modern" challenging the "modern" (Razack 2008: 147), and according to which Sharia law is framed as "un-Canadian" (Razack 2008: 151). There is also long-running European "legal fascination with the Muslim woman's body *as a culturally different body*" (Razack 2008: 125; original emphasis), such as in debates about banning headscarves in schools, attempts to abolish practices of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and forced marriages (Razack 2008: 126). Abu-Lughod agrees that a focus on such far-away topics that are "spectacularly oppressive" (2013: 7) makes mobilization easier, and does not challenge the notion of the "United States as the beacon of humanitarianism" (2013: 8; citing Farrell and McDermott). By contrast, challenging patriarchy in Western societies is a much harder sell, and makes it more difficult for feminists to be accepted into the political mainstream. Arab and Muslim feminists thus also find themselves

silenced and their concerns limited to those sanctioned by Western "liberal" feminism, such as veiling and FGM, which are symbols of backward cultures and societies, but which do not comprehensively reflect the issues that Arab and Muslim women may consider to be most important (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxxvi). Elia notes that Arab-American feminists are often invited to speak at "progressive" events, but are expected to conform to the narrative of "the oppression of Arab women by Islamic fundamentalism", and avoid discussion of past and present colonialism or criticisms of Zionism (2011: 141). As Jarmakani notes, Arab-American feminist thought is overlooked or ignored "unless it engages the dominant myths and categories through which Arab womanhood has been filtered in the United States" (2011: 234).

Muslim women – and the clothing they wear – are perceived by the West as indicators of the modernity or lack thereof of Muslim communities (Razack 2008: 16). Kahf argues that the veil is portrayed as if it were "the most oppressive device since the rack" and "a visual icon of Islamic sexism" (2011: 118). For example, even a low-stakes comedy like *Community* that features a character like Abed Nadir –who is a complex and fully realized character whose identity goes far beyond his Muslim-ness (see chapter eight) – subscribes to this trope of the veiled Muslim woman. When Abed's cousin Abra visits from the Gaza strip, not only does she wear a *burqa* and cover her whole body, but she is overprotected to the point that her uncle – Abed's father Gobi – will not even let her jump in a children's bouncy castle (S01E18). She is also greeted variously with alarm and ridicule and called names like a "black ghost" or the "phantom menace", although Abed explains the *burqa* as a "way for women to express their modesty; they're like Islamic turtlenecks" (S01E18). Abra is mostly a silent character, in part because she does not speak English and requires the intermediary of Abed as translator in order to communicate with everyone but Abed and Gobi. However, she does engage in heated debate

with her uncle, criticizing him for being overprotective and calling him names (as translated by Abed) (S01E18). She is briefly accorded the agency and opportunity to pursue her modest desires: following the slap-stick comedy trope of multiple children sitting on each other's shoulders in a trench coat to pretend to be an adult, two young boys replace Abra in her *burqa* and face covering so that she can have a taste of Western freedoms, even if only to jump in a bouncy castle.

Morey and Yaqin also describe the trope of "the oppressed, veiled woman" (2011: 2) and note that more attention is paid to the bodies of Muslim women than to their male counterparts: Muslim women are seen as "silent carriers of tradition" and are thus "made to carry the *burden of representation*, symbolizing far more than their male coreligionists" (2011: 40; emphasis added). El-Ghobashy also notes that although there is no single female Muslim identity or perspective, Muslim women who are identifiable by their dress are presumed to represent all Muslim women across time and space, and are saddled with the responsibility of combatting stereotypes (2011: 100). Naber agrees that women are made to carry the burden of representation for Arab and Muslim cultures, and notes that girls are particularly pressured "to uphold idealized demands of Arab culture" and "symbolize the respectability" of their families (2011: 79), and that "young women's bodies and behaviors [are] key signifiers in the stereotyped distinction between Arabs and Americans" (2011: 80).

It is also useful to recall narratives about Malala Yousafzai (who is, of course, not Arab but Pakistani, but perceptions of shared Muslim-ness links these regions in the Western imaginary): Malala bears the burden of representing Pakistani girls not only as an advocate for the education of women and girls in Pakistan, but as a particularly high profile one, as the youngest ever recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. Recalling narratives of patriarchal

Muslim men wanting to control the bodies of women and girls when their behaviour defies "religious" or "cultural" expectations – e.g. the "honour killing" of a Muslim teenager on *Sleeper Cell* – Malala was shot in the head by a member of the Taliban who "sought to make an example of her for her and her family's active advocacy of education for women and girls" (Beier 2015a: 1). Malala's agency is also tied to her victimization at the hands of her shooter, and in this dynamic she occupies both subject and object positions (Beier 2015a: 4).

Abu-Lughod has persuasively argued that Muslim women are perceived as in need of being "saved" from their cultures, and that this is a central narrative of the "War on Terror" and Western intervention in the Middle East and South Asia (2013: 7; also Hatem 2011: 12-13). This is a particularly powerful narrative, as sympathy for the oppressed Muslim woman is shared across the political spectrum, uniting liberals and conservatives alike (Alsultany 2012: 71). Naber describes the powerful narrative that projects "hyperoppressed shrouded Arab and Muslim women who need to be saved by American heroes, of a culture of Arab Muslim sexual savagery that needs to be disciplined—and in the process, modernized—through U.S. military violence" (2011: 81). Alsultany also argues that "saving Muslim women is a compelling way to gain support for military intervention" and that "liberating" Muslim women from their oppressors – Muslim men and "'barbaric' Islamic culture" – is part and parcel of fighting terrorism (2012: 73). She persuasively affirms that "[w]ar has been and continues to be made possible in part by the media's eager cultivation of pity and outrage" (Alsultany 2012: 99). As such, it is important to pay attention to and think critically about portrayals of Muslim-ness as victimhood in television programs, along with news media and other sites of representation.

Morey and Yaqin agree that Muslim women have often been cast and perceived as silent and passive victims, and that the issue of "saving Muslim women" has been a popular political

issue, not least to be championed by the wives of prominent British and American politicians (2011: 178). The war in Afghanistan in particular, from its beginning in 2001, was largely "justified in terms of saving Afghan women" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 29). Reflecting narratives of Afghanistan in the news media and in American foreign policy, *Homeland* describes Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan: "girls not allowed in school, roving gangs of men with whips enforcing Sharia law" and a "safe haven for Al-Qaeda" (S04E01). The image of Muslim women as passive or docile is rooted in colonial Orientalist stereotypes, and in the post-9/11 period, "the image of the veiled and beaten body of the Afghan woman under the Taliban was deployed on a massive scale and came to stand for Muslim and Arab women generally" (Amireh 2011: 32). This also illustrates the extent to which Muslim and Arab identities are collapsed in Western imaginaries, as Afghanistan is not an Arab country, but the women of Afghanistan became interchangeable with any Middle Eastern and/or Muslim women. For instance, even though the situation in Iraq was quite different, as Iraqi women had "previously enjoyed the highest levels of education, labor force participation, and even political involvement in the Arab world" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 7), assumptions about the need to "save" Muslim women also informed the context of the invasion of Iraq.

We must not forget that military intervention also has many negative consequences for women. Justifying intervention on the grounds of protecting foreign women is not a new phenomenon, but indicates continuity with earlier colonial approaches. Postcolonial authors have long criticized colonial justifications of the need for White men to save "brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1988/1994: 93). For example, intervening in the practices of child marriage and of *sati*, in which widows burn themselves alongside their deceased husbands on their funeral pyres, were used to justify British colonial rule in South Asia (Abu-Lughod 2013: 33; Spivak

1988/1994). Because Western feminists often fail to change these optics, and instead shift the optics from "white *men* [...] saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1988/1994: 93; emphasis added) to White *women* saving brown women from brown men, they thus "participate in empire through the *politics of rescue*" (Razack 2008: 17; emphasis added). Indeed, the agency that Western women show by "[s]aving Muslim women from the excesses of their society marks Western women as emancipated" (Razack 2008: 86), even while they undermine the issue of violence against women in the West by framing it as an issue of backwards Muslim cultures rather than an issue of world-wide patriarchy. This position remains imperialist because "Western women's rights" civilizing missions and rhetoric place Western women in "the position of savior rather than one of solidarity *with* feminists in Afghanistan", and reinforce stereotypical notions of Muslim women as "monolithically oppressed" (Jarmakani 2011: 228; emphasis added). Thus, feminist imperialist frameworks capitalize on "the image of exotic, oppressed women who must be saved from their indigenous (hyper)patriarchy" (Jarmakani 2011: 228). In sum, it is difficult "to resist calls to 'save the women'" (Razack 2008: 17). In contemporary times, the language of human rights and women's rights is very powerful (Abu-Lughod 2013: 54, 81). As such, another consequence is that multiculturalism can only be tolerated to a point, because minority cultures abuse women (Razack 2008: 104).

The veiling of Muslim women also helps to freeze Muslims as existing outside of modernity according to a Western imaginary. Razack argues that the body of the Muslim woman, which is:

fixed in the Western imaginary as confined, mutilated, and sometimes murdered in the name of culture, [reinforces] the threat that the Muslim man is said to pose to the West,

and is used to justify the extraordinary measures of violence and surveillance required to discipline him and Muslim communities (2008: 107).

Emphasis on the veiling of Muslim women and the reinforcing and reification of assumptions about the violence of Muslim men and the victimhood of Muslim women are founded in orientalist assumptions which leave us with superficial stereotypes and limit our ability to understand Muslim women's lives (Razack 2008: 111). Charges of anti-Muslim bigotry are resisted by television programs and other media with disclaimers that not *all* Muslims are villains, and through the testimonies of "liberated" women whose stories confirm the "barbaric nature of Islam" (Alsultany 2012: 74); these strategies are successful because they "produce an excess of affect" (Alsultany 2012: 75).

Razack notes that unveiling the body of the imperilled Muslim woman – to make her modern – "functions not only to discipline the Muslim man, who is considered to be the source of her containment, but also provides the pleasure of colonial mastery and possession" (Razack 2008: 80). *Homeland*'s Fara Sherazi primarily performs the trope of the "Good" Muslim: she is a patriotic counter-terror agent who prides herself on her Americanness (see chapter five). However, Fara also performs Muslim-ness as victimhood: she is verbally abused by her superior while wearing a *hijab* (S03E02) and is treated with condescension in other professional situations. Her greater empowerment as a CIA agent is accompanied by shedding her *hijab* and donning more Western clothing (S04), and by ultimately dying at the hands of violent Muslim men (S04E10). Because markers of Muslim-ness are deeply tied to perceptions of Muslim women as oppressed, there is little room for Muslim women to wear such markers of Muslim-ness and *not* be portrayed as victims, and therefore lacking agency. Likewise, *24*'s Nadia Yassir

does not wear a headscarf, and is characterized as thoroughly Americanized[18]. Most women who wear a *hijab* are portrayed as victims of hate crimes, such as on *7th Heaven* (Alsultany 2012: 71). As such, for Muslim women, being Westernized and "liberated" appears directly proportional to secularism and avoiding visible markers of Muslim-ness. Because the *hijab* and other markers of Muslim-ness are read as indicators of religiosity, Muslim women are also denied the agency of choosing "to live a faith-based life" as they are "[d]ismissed as naive" and "told they [were] coerced into wearing the veil" (Razack 2008: 155). On *Homeland*, Fara's uncle in Iran is surprised that she wears a *hijab* in America (S03E11). Carrie suggests that the reason for this is that Fara's "heart is still here, in Tehran" (S03E11). This dismisses Fara's agency in choosing to wear a *hijab* because of personal religious and/or political convictions – such as proudly expressing her Muslim identity in a country and workplace rife with anti-Muslim sentiment – and not just "cultural" reasons or societal pressures.

The Western desire to "save" Muslim women has also involved placing "pressure on Arab and Muslim women to accept the Orientalist and racist notion that Arab society is inherently violent, misogynist, and sexually repressive" (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxxi). Hegemonic American feminisms marginalize the struggles of Arab and Arab American feminists within and outside their communities on intersecting issues of gender, race, sexuality, and homophobia, among other issues (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxxi). Informed by Orientalist narratives and assumptions, issues of "multiculturalism" are presented as being in opposition to women's rights (Razack 2008: 153). Arab (or Muslim) feminism is assumed to be an oxymoron and is insinuated out of existence (Jarmakani 2011: 227). Razack argues that Western "feminists can no longer simplistically assume that the secular is a haven for women, and religion a

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[18] Although Nadia performs some elements of Muslim-ness as victimhood by Western discrimination in that she is unjustly suspected of working with terrorists, she primarily performs the trope of the patriotic and loyal American counter-terror agent (see chapter five).

dangerous place", as this does nothing to challenge either Orientalism or patriarchy, especially as patriarchy is also deeply implicated in White supremacy (2008: 165). These rhetorical strategies "reify the false binaries of liberation and oppression" that are unavoidable for Arab and Muslim women (Jarmakani 2011: 233).

As Abu-Lughod reminds us, Muslim women lead different kinds of lives and have many different reasons for choosing to wear a veil – or not – and that what Muslim women wear is not necessarily the most defining feature of their lives or the struggles they face (2013). Jarmakani calls the veil an "overdetermined signifier" and notes that powerful symbols like the veil serve colonialist and imperialist agendas through reinforcing Western "cultural mythologies about the Arab and Muslim worlds" (2011: 228). We cannot simplistically assume that Muslim women do not have any rights (Abu-Lughod 2013: 4), and we should question why, when gender inequality exists throughout the world, there is a special focus on Muslim countries, as well as why Islam is essentialized in ways other religions are not (Abu-Lughod 2013: 6). Victim narratives also deny agency, as in "the common Western story of the *hapless* Muslim woman oppressed by her culture" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 9; emphasis added). Because of imperial rhetoric about the veil as a symbol of silencing and oppression, Muslim womanhood is simultaneously hypervisible, and yet invisible within a semiotic war that treats "Muslim women as either hidden or revealed objects rather than thinking subjects" (Jarmakani 2011: 229). It is simplistic to presume based on someone's dress that "they are not agentic individuals or cannot speak for themselves" (Abu-Lughod 2013: 9); Muslim women should be treated as subjects, and not passive and silent victims who need to be "saved". Of course, this is not to say that Muslim women do not suffer, but that their experiences and suffering have many causes, and not all of these should be imputed to religion and culture (Abu-Lughod 2013: 221), nor reduced to wearing a headscarf.

Furthermore, we should not only pay attention to the most sensational forms of gendered violence (Abu-Lughod 2013: 221-2).

Muslim women are also more vulnerable to the "real-life" consequences of negative and reductionist perceptions of Muslims. Since 9/11, racism and violence against Muslims and Arabs has intensified (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxxi). Because it is a visible marker of Muslim-ness, "Islamophobia [has] marked the *hijab* as negative and threatening" (Abdulhadi et al. 2011: xxi). For example, according to a study that surveyed victims of physical and verbal abuse:

> Women wearing head scarves were especially at risk of harassment and discrimination. After 9/11, the hijab was taken to signify that its wearer was 'sympathetic to the enemy, presumptively disloyal, and forever foreign'. Women faced discrimination in employment and violence on the streets, often involving attempts to pull off their head scarves. (Kundnani 2014: 64-5)

Reductionist perceptions of Muslim women which are (re)circulated in pop culture are inextricable from negative rhetoric in political and social life, and from real-life harassment of Muslim individuals, which particularly targets Muslim women because of their visibility. Immediately after 9/11, Muslim women were the most visible and thus "earliest targets of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab violence"; although they were also the first to organize against it and use their visibility to educate Americans about Islam and Muslims (Hatem 2011: 23). This context also made decisions on whether or not to wear the *hijab* more political than before, as some religious leaders advocated not wearing the *hijab* in light of political and societal tensions, while some Muslim women considered the *hijab* as particularly important "as an expression of their pride in a religion that was increasingly maligned in the United States", and as a way to exercise one's freedom (Hatem 2011: 23). However, such women who consciously choose to wear a veil

face opposition from both within and without the American Muslim community, who reiterate Orientalist perceptions of the veil as "a symbol of oppression" which denies Muslim women "active participation in society" (Hatem 2011: 25). Many women who choose to wear the veil feel that they are treated with suspicion not only by non-Muslim Americans, but also by those within their communities, as people will often assume based on their clothing that they hold conservative or illiberal views, thus reinforcing a false dichotomy between, on the one hand, veiling and backwardness and, on the other, secularism, liberalism, and rejecting "Islamic" modes of dress (Hatem 2011: 27). Many also see a dichotomy between American-ness and Arab-ness or Muslim-ness, and have trouble imagining Arabs as Americans (Jarmakani 2011: 235).

Targeting of Muslim women did not only occur, then, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, but has been ongoing, and spikes in harassment of Muslim women often follow particularly dramatic and well-publicized instances of acts of Islamic terror against Western countries. For example, in the weeks following the attacks on Paris in November 2015, women were disproportionately targeted in a wave of anti-Muslim harassment. For example, in Toronto a woman was physically assaulted outside a school and called a "terrorist" and told to "go back to [her] country" (Nielsen et al. 2015). Two women wearing *hijabs* were accosted on the Toronto subway (Police investigating 2015). In London, attacks on Muslims more than tripled following the Paris attacks, including incidents such as a Muslim "woman wearing a hijab being pushed into an oncoming train on the London Underground" (Gani 2015). In France, there were many attacks on Muslims, and most female victims wore identifiably "Muslim" clothing when they were attacked (Gopalaskrishnan 2015). Such attacks remain a regular feature of the societal landscape; for example, in June 2016, a Muslim woman in London, Ontario was assaulted, spat on, and had her *hijab* pulled by another woman in a grocery store (Russell 2016). Examples such

as these reflect a larger trend: in Canada there were 45 hate crimes against Muslims in 2012, and 99 such incidents in 2014 (Russell 2016). In 2016 in the United States, hate crimes against Muslims were at the highest levels since 2001; this includes "hundreds of attacks – including arsons at mosques, assaults, shootings and threats of violence since the beginning of 2015" (Lichtblau 2016). This increase in hate crimes is attributed to both recent terror attacks by Muslims, as well as the anti-Muslim rhetoric of President Trump during the 2015-16 American election cycle (Lichtblau 2016) and from the outset of the Trump administration in 2017.

Victims of Patriarchal Islam and/or Islamic Terrorism

The most common form of performing Muslim-ness as victimhood is to portray individuals as victims of patriarchal Islam and Islamic terrorism. This category includes characters such as Reza Naiyeer on *24*, who was the evident suspect of supporting terror, but was innocent and murdered by the true culprit: his blonde, American fiancée (S02E10). However, aside from rare examples such as Reza's, this type of performance category is strongly gendered and infantilized: 32 of 41 victims of patriarchal and terroristic Islam – "bad" Muslims – are women (22; including two female youths) and youths (10). This is a common mode of representation, not only in scripted television shows: as discussed above, across the ideological spectrum, Muslim women are frequently "represented as veiled, oppressed, and in need of rescue" (Alsultany 2012: 71).

This category includes women who are victims of abuse (e.g. Fatima Ali, *Homeland*, S02E02) or murder (Mrs. Javadi, *Homeland*, S03E06) by their terrorist husbands; women who are betrayed and manipulated by their terrorist lovers (Kayla Hassan, *24*, S08E12); victims of honour crimes (*Sleeper Cell*, S01E01); and victims of revenge feuds between Muslim men, whether intended (Samia bin Safwan, *Sleeper Cell*, S02E08) or accidentally caught in the

crossfire (Amira Al-Fayeed, *Tyrant*, S02E10). Patriarchal "Muslim" culture is to blame for many of these evils. For example, Majid Javadi justifies killing his ex-wife, who left him thirty-five years prior, on the grounds that she was "unfaithful": "In the eyes of God we're still married" (*Homeland* S03E07). He affirms that he would have "stoned her to death" if he had had enough time, but instead viciously and repeatedly stabbed her to death with a broken bottle and shot his daughter-in-law in the head (S03E07). Even *Sleeper Cell*'s Samia, who is mainly supportive of her husband's role as a terrorist leader, is subject to domestic violence when she expresses a greater desire for his survival than for rewards in paradise (S01E09). Domestic violence is regularly normalized as part of "Muslim" or "Middle Eastern" culture: even *Tyrant*'s very sympathetic main character Barry strikes his son in anger (S01E01). This category also includes children, some of whom are coerced into becoming suicide bombers (*The Grid*, ep. 5/6). *Sleeper Cell*'s Asma, the twelve-year-old daughter of the primary villain, is told to wear a *hijab* and *abaya* (a loose over-garment), despite her protests that she prefers her old clothing. She is also made to stop drawing and to throw her artwork into a fire, because her father tells her that looking at her own drawings is worshipping a false God and means that she would "rather spend eternity in hell" than in paradise (S02E05).

Muslim women are also victims that are caught in the crossfire of their husbands' or families' involvement in terrorism, such as Samia on *Sleeper Cell* (S02E08), as noted above. On *The Grid*, Reem Mutar is a casualty of her brother's involvement with terrorism. However, Reem is not passive or silent: from the beginning of the series, she is shown to work with her brother, Dr. Raghib Mutar, at a medical clinic, and speaks her mind to him, reminding him that not everyone shares his interpretation of Islam and criticizing him for complaining that a female employee should dress more conservatively (ep. 1/2). When he is arrested, she bails him out of

jail and actively tries to dissuade him from engagement with terrorism, arguing that his "*jihad* is just an excuse to give in to anger. Ours is a religion of justice"; she affirms that their views of Islam are at odds, and criticizes him for avoiding discussion of religion and politics with her, "a mere woman" (ep. 3). Nevertheless, Reem bears the consequences of her brother's actions, and is abducted and beaten with a club (ep. 4). Despite this violence, she remains steadfast in her beliefs: "Don't use what happened to me as a reason to get in deeper with these jihadists, Raghib. Don't confuse revenge for righteousness" (ep. 4). She reminds him that murder is forbidden in Islam: "Whoever kills a human, unless it be in punishment for murder, it shall be as though he had slain all mankind" (ep. 4). Raghib does not break his association with the terror group, and Reem is murdered by inept policemen who accidentally kill her while attempting to threaten and interrogate her about her brother (ep. 4). It is interesting to note that while most of the Muslim men portrayed in television programs are quick to anger and violence – even *Sleeper Cell*'s sympathetic and protypical "Good" Muslim Darwyn succumbs to his desire for revenge – Muslim women, such as Reem, are typically patient, level-headed, and compassionate, which is in sharp contrast with their male counterparts. The fact that Muslim men are so quick to anger reinforces the notion that the danger posed by toxic Muslim masculinity is omnipresent; even the apparently mild-mannered Muslim next door may give in to violent impulses at any time.

Although no Saudi women are featured as characters to this point on *Homeland*[19], CIA agent protagonist Carrie is able to coerce a Saudi diplomat into cooperating with them by threatening to have his daughter kicked out of Yale and prevented from attending any North American or European universities (S01E10). Without the possibility of escape from Saudi Arabia via the opportunity of being educated in the West, Carrie affirms that otherwise her plight as a Saudi woman is to "get fat and wear a *burqa* for the rest of her miserable life" (S01E10).

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[19] The first five seasons are included in this corpus.

Being a woman in Saudi Arabia is established to be so heinous that this threat is effective, even though the diplomat resisted threats of exposing his debts and homosexuality (S01E10). His cooperation in order to "save" his daughter is done at great personal risk to himself and, indeed, he is soon killed (S01E10). This also reflects the idea that Muslim women need to be "saved" by patriarchal sources, even when the threat is American and the defender is a Muslim father.

The programs studied also show women to be empowered by American values and lifestyles, such as when an Imam's wife goes behind his back to give a CIA agent information on what she knows about a terrorist that has been frequenting her husband's mosque, stating that she was convinced by what Carrie said about "this country" (Zahira Gohar, *Homeland*, S01E09). Elsewhere, Fatima Ali, a wife of a Hezbollah commander, is recruited as an asset by Carrie, who bonds with her over Fatima's love of American movies and of Julia Roberts in particular (*Homeland,* S02E01). Fatima is willing to inform on her husband because she is a victim of domestic abuse, which also confirms her trustworthiness and desire to cooperate in getting her husband killed: "Her husband does horrible things to her. She wants out" (S02E02).

Homeland also provides regular, casually-stated reminders that Islam permits polygamy, such as in noting that Fatima Ali is the *first* wife of a Hezbollah commander (S02E01) and that Saudi diplomat Al-Zahrani has multiple wives, and married his first wife when they were both fifteen years old, through an "arranged marriage, of course" (S01E10). Interestingly, *Tyrant* portrays the young and beautiful Daliyah as not necessarily victimized by being a second wife, as she appears to deeply respect her husband, whom she considers a good and kind man (S02E03). Although she did not necessarily love him at first, the context of living in a small and remote village may imply that her marriage to Ahmos was a good option for her. There is also an interesting class dynamic here, as rich men with multiple wives are often portrayed as greedy and

misogynist, whereas in a poor Bedouin village in Abbudin, Ahmos is portrayed as kind and loving to his two wives. Daliyah is offered an opportunity for empowerment by the West, and is accepted into a solar engineering program in Germany (S02E04). Although her husband is supportive and encourages her, most of the men in her village are in favour of maintaining the ignorance and restricting the mobility of women: even the local doctor affirms that allowing women to leave the village and experience more of the world is a bad idea (S02E04). Daliyah is further victimized by fundamentalist and terroristic Islam: her car is attacked by the ISIS/Daesh inspired "Caliphate" and, although she is not killed, she is prevented from going to Germany and is kidnapped by the Caliphate because their leader desires to rape her (S02E05).

Indeed, another recurring trope is that of Muslim rape victims, such as the woman who has been repeatedly raped by *Tyrant*'s Jamal Al-Fayeed, often while her husband and children are forced to wait in the hall and overhear the act (S01E01). However, in an act that costs her life, she reclaims her agency and attempts to assassinate Jamal; although she fails at this, she also violently bites and severely injures his penis (S01E01). Nusrat is also a victim of rape by Jamal, who rapes her at her wedding to Jamal's son Ahmed; Jamal claims that he is fulfilling his fatherly duty to confirm that she was a virgin before the wedding (S01E01). Shortly thereafter, she suffers an additional trauma as she is also kidnapped by Muslim boys who tear her dress and leave her bra exposed, although she shows strength in appealing to the sympathy and youth of her captors (S01E02). Due to her rape, Nusrat is traumatized and depressed, and unable to consummate her marriage with her husband Ahmed, whom she had loved until this trauma. This delay in consummating the marriage frustrates and concerns her husband, who is not aware of the rape; the situation puts a serious strain on their marriage from its beginning. Nusrat also suffers the humiliation (S01E05) and execution of her father at the behest of Jamal (S01E10).

She eventually consummates her marriage and becomes pregnant, and takes solace in the future she hopes to provide for her child (S02E01), although she later suffers a miscarriage (S02E07). Like Jamal's coerced "mistress", Nusrat eventually fights back and shoots Jamal (S02E12).

Tyrant's Jill is another victim of Muslim terrorists and rapists. Jill wears a *hijab* and has an American accent. She is the unwilling wife of a Caliphate commander and appears distressed and traumatized; when asked if she is tired from "comforting" her husband, she replies: "We don't call that 'comforting' in America. We call it rape" (S02E05). Jane, the wife of Caliphate leader Abu Omar, tells her that "a wife should do as she's told. It will get easier" (S02E05). In addition to being traumatized by regular sexual violence, Jill is also forced to hold the camera and record the Caliphate's execution of Westerners and is sprayed with their blood (S02E05). She is also revealed to have first been a victim of Islamist ideology, which is what brought her to Abbudin: she is a Muslim from Chicago who never felt at home in the United States and ran away to join the Caliphate. Although she seems disillusioned with some of their methods, she appears to be believe in their ideology, as she argues that Muslim-Americans who do not join the Caliphate are denying who they are (S02E05). Despite having placed herself, to some extent, in this situation, Jill exemplifies both the Victim and Escapee narratives. Jill was a victim of rape by her violent Muslim terrorist husband. She also manages to escape her situation through a combination of her own initiative and the assistance of *Tyrant*'s protagonist Barry, a Westernized and thus "enlightened" man who believes in respecting women (S02E05). Jill is not the only Victim-Escapee who is rescued by *Tyrant*'s male protagonist; this category also includes Daliyah, who is held captive by Abu Omar (S02E06). Like *Tyrant*'s Jamal (see chapter four), Abu Omar is an Orientalist stereotype of the backwards, brutish "Eastern" man, who takes pleasure in raping women, asserting that he "expected more fight from" Daliyah when she

stoically refuses to appear afraid (S02E06). After surviving a sensational captivity, Daliyah is rescued by Barry (S02E07); thus, she too embodies both the Victim and Escapee narratives.

There is an interesting subset of (mostly female) Muslims who are victims of Islamic terrorism, but whose direct perpetrators are women. For instance, Simone Al-Harazi and her husband Naveed are victims of Margot Al-Harazi, Simone's mother: Margot chops off one of Simone's fingers in an effort to force Naveed to pilot drones after he gets cold feet (S09E04) and later kills him (S09E05). She tries to kill Simone with a drone strike when she fears that Simone has been compromised (S09E07). Simone, in turn, victimizes Naveed's sister Fara, whom she kills to prevent her from exposing Simone as a terrorist (S09E06). Fara is also marked as being more progressive than Simone through contrasting Simone's choice to wear a *hijab* in public and the fact that Fara does not (despite the fact that Simone is a White convert, and Fara is of an unspecified "Middle Eastern" background) (S09E06). Yasmine – Fara's daughter – is also victimized: she has been orphaned and will be forever traumatized by the murder of her mother at the hands of her beloved aunt, as well as her own narrow escape through the busy streets of London (S09E06). Although in the case of the Al-Harazi family, women are the perpetrators of these acts of violence, this situation does not truly deviate from the narrative of Islam as a fundamentally evil and patriarchal force, as Margot and Simone have been corrupted through their conversion to Islam, which occurred through Margot's marriage to an Al-Qaeda commander, whom she credits with having given her and her children a "purpose" (S09E09). Margot relies on gendered narratives of "honour" in her attempts to coerce Naveed into piloting the drones and spews simplistic rhetoric about American political leaders as murderers in order to justify the killing not only of elites, but of the citizens who elect them (S09E04). Margot explicitly asserts that she is emulating her late husband's willingness to die for his beliefs

(S09E09). As such, even when the perpetrators are women, violent and patriarchal Islam remains the ultimate cause of victimizing Muslim women.

Tyrant's Daliyah is victimized by Jane, the wife of Abu Omar, the Caliphate commander, who has her kidnapped for Abu Omar (S02E06). While Jane insists that Dahliyah must obey Abu Omar and do anything he wants, Daliyah criticizes Jane for her "perverted misinterpretations of the Qur'an" and for sleeping with murderers (S02E06). Daliyah is also held hostage by (though eventually saved from) Samira (S02E07). Samira had shown agency in resisting her corrupt government (S01) and even in choosing to join the "Caliphate" to do so (S02E04). However, she is also the tragic victim of Islamist ideology, as she betrays her own humanity by allying herself with the Caliphate. She is ultimately killed in self defense by Barry who has come to rescue Daliyah (S02E07).

Reflecting the intersection of Muslim-ness with sexual orientation and homophobia, gay men are also shown to be victims of a backwards Islamic culture. For example, *Tyrant*'s Abdul and several other gay men are murdered by the "Caliphate" by being thrown off a building, specifically because they are gay (S02E07). Even before this, Abdul had to hide his homosexuality, because, at best, his life and opportunities would be severely restricted (S01E04). Following a larger trend of under-representing women in portrayals of queer individuals and communities, no queer women are featured in any of the programs studied.

Class is also an important factor in the "victimhood" of Muslim women, and can be argued to be a more powerful factor than religion in making it difficult to challenge violence against women, including rape, especially in countries and regions that are under pressure by corrupt governments, police forces, or other powerful elites (Kahf 2011: 118). The impact of class is strong on *Tyrant,* in which the tyrannical rulers of Abbudin are secular, but fabulously

wealthy and corrupt. The most powerful woman on the show is Leila. She despises her husband Jamal, but is also power-hungry and pushes him to be more corrupt and more ruthless to support her interests in keeping the Al-Fayeed family in power. Another example of a privileged Muslim woman who does *not* perform Muslim-ness as victimhood – aside from the pain caused by her husband's infidelity – is *24*'s Dalia Hassan. Dalia is the wife of a Middle Eastern president; she takes over her husband's position after he is murdered by terrorists (S08E18). It is rare to see Muslim women portrayed as political leaders, and both Leila on *Tyrant* and Dalia on *24* access these positions through their marriage to the country's leader.

The intersection of class and gender is very important to consider in the performances of (female) Muslim-ness as victimhood on *Tyrant*. For instance, Nusrat is victimized when she is raped by Jamal, but takes solace in the fact that her marriage into Abbudin's ruling family means important opportunities for her unborn child. However, her class-based opportunities in life are also gendered, and she is pressured by her mother-in-law Leila to request a divorce from her husband once she can no longer give him an heir (S02E08). In contrast, Daliyah is from a poor village and is a second wife, although her husband is portrayed as kind and respectful. *Tyrant* also abounds with poor and middle class individuals who want to challenge their corrupt government. Fauzi is a journalist who was tortured by the regime (S01E01). Fauzi's daughter Samira, who is well-educated and aspired to be a lawyer, joins a revolutionary movement that seeks to oust the Al-Fayeed family from power, and eventually turns to violence and working with the Caliphate army. Halima worked for Leila to create a heritage film to promote tourism to Abbudin, but is also a graffiti and social media dissident, and is bold enough to confront Leila directly after her sister dies in a gas attack; she goes on to fight with the resistance. Ahmos is a humble Bedouin who joins the fight against the Caliphate after his wife Daliyah has been

kidnapped. Ru'a, Ahmos' cousin, takes up arms against the Caliphate as part of a women's battalion; she defies the stereotypes of Muslim-ness as victimhood, even though she is killed in action: she dies the death of a warrior, and not of a helpless victim.

It is interesting to note that the women who are shown to have joined the Caliphate willingly are of more privileged backgrounds, such as Samira, the well-educated daughter of a journalist, and Jane and Jill, who came from the West to fight with the Caliphate – even though this experience might not be what they had hoped for (e.g. Jill's experiences of rape and thus later escaping from the Caliphate and her husband). Leila is the most powerful Muslim woman on *Tyrant*, and she participates in the oppression of her people. The least privileged women, such as Daliyah and Ru'a, participate in the resistance and are among the strongest and most moral characters on the show. This ties into class dynamics of popular portrayals of Arabs and Muslims such as the trope of the "oily sheikh" which reflects insecurities about fabulously wealthy and corrupt elites and political leaders who have oil to thank for their success, but who oppress their own people, in addition to threatening Western interests. On *Tyrant*, the fictional country of Abbudin does indeed owe its wealth to rich oil fields. Meanwhile, the show weaves a narrative about the resistance of the masses in overthrowing corrupt regimes and demanding democracy.

Youth, childhood, and vulnerability

Because both women and youths are strongly represented in performances of Muslim-ness as victimhood, it is also important to discuss social constructions of childhood, and particularly how notions of innocence and vulnerability are central to how we think about children and childhood (Beier 2015a: 4). Children are denied full political subjecthood and are regarded as being in the process of "becoming" (Beier 2015a: 5) and not yet as complete persons

according to "imaginaries in which theirs is an innocent existence assigned to particular places such as home and school" (Beier 2015a: 10).

Homeland's Issa Nazir is an example of victimhood as associated with innocence, dependence, and vulnerability. Issa – along with many other children – is killed in an American drone strike intended for terrorist targets, but which hit a school. The internal logic of *Homeland* suggests that Issa and the other children killed in the drone strike would have been safe were it not for the proximity of Issa's father, Abu Nazir, a major Al-Qaeda commander, and by the very existence of terrorism, which itself is blamed on Muslim culture. Children do not choose the circumstances of their birth and do not choose the people on whom they depend; as such, Issa is a tragic and innocent victim of both the behaviour of his father and of the American drone strike. From a Western perspective, Issa's death is made all the more tragic by the fact that he was also spending time with and learning English from an American, thus increasing his potential to become "civilized" and escape the Muslim "culture" that killed him. It should also be noted that the drone strike that killed Issa and eighty other children is referred to as a "drone strike against a *madrassa* full of kids" (S02E10). *Madrassa* is simply Arabic for "school", but is often used to specifically refer to religious schools, which from a Western perspective are assumed to radicalize children. It is not specified what kind of curriculum this school had, but using the word "*madrassa*" instead of "school" helps to underline the cultural and civilizational otherness of the children who studied there and the teachers who taught them.

Other nameless children are also portrayed as victims of their culture; the most dramatic example of this is the villain's use of children as suicide bombers on *The Grid*. The scenes of children being outfitted as suicide bombers are viscerally upsetting (ep. 5/6). As Beier notes, "[c]hildren are easily mobilised into 'emotional scenery' underwriting the 'war on terror'"

(2015a: 9). The horrific spectacle of strapping bombs to children reinforces the idea that children experience greater forms of risk and instability in the global South (Beier 2015a: 3) and it is implied that the endangerment (and mental and emotional manipulation) of children is exceptionally backwards and evil. Narratives of children as innocent victims rely on a shared assumption that childhood "is an innocent stage of life [that must] be protected" (Beier 2015a: 5). Furthermore, children are the "quintessential innocent civilians" (Beier 2015a: 8) as there is little possible ambiguity about their responsibility in creating the situation in which they are harmed. For example, even if one has legitimate political grievances, harming civilians – most alarmingly, children – is clearly an illegitimate and unreasonable way to express even the most reasonable concerns. Because it is so laden with shared meanings, "the trope of innocent childhood is a powerful political expedient" (Beier 2015a: 7) and the abuse of children is a shorthand that can easily imply villainy: even amongst supervillains, putting children in suicide vests is beyond the pale. This also subverts the typical narrative of childhood innocence because children become "dangerous beings", as with the case of child soldiers (Beier 2015a: 8): children wearing suicide vests are capable of killing civilians and security agents. Indeed, in a heroic effort to restore the innocence and safety of childhood, *The Grid*'s "Good" Muslim, Raza Michaels, dies while trying to save the fourth of four children who had been outfitted and brainwashed into becoming suicide bombers.

On *Sleeper Cell*, Khashul is a seventeen-year-old boy who has allegedly been fighting since he was twelve years old (S01E07). He was falsely accused of being part of the Taliban by someone who did not like his father, and was held and tortured in Guantanamo Bay; as such, Khashul is a victim of American policies and the American system in a very concrete way. By the time he was returned to Afghanistan, his family was gone, and his real experiences of

American injustice made him easy prey for a Sheikh who was part of the Taliban to convince him to "fight for Islam", and has now come to "fight jihad in Los Angeles" (S01E07). Khashul is a product of his conservative Muslim upbringing, and says that wearing bikinis is forbidden, and that women who wear them would be killed in Afghanistan (S01E07). He is a victim of such fundamentalist worldviews and has been exposed to no other way of seeing the world; as such, he is a victim of patriarchal and radical Islam, in addition to being a victim of American policies that allowed him – a child – to be held and tortured without trial in Afghanistan. When Darwyn brings him to a progressive mosque where men and women worship and celebrate together and reflect less conservative variants of Islam, such as Sufism, Khashul is initially scandalized, but eventually enjoys himself: "Darwyn, you show me so much in one day *(sic)*. My sheikh never mentioned these things" (S01E07). Darwyn, an American Muslim, gives Khashul a Pashtun translation of the Qur'an and encourages him to read it and to decide for himself what he should believe about Islam (S01E07); clearly, Khashul's family and religious teachers had never promoted a critical and introspective approach to faith. Although Darwyn tries to save Khashul, his trauma at the hands of Americans prompts him to resist being taken into American custody, and he slits the throat of Darwyn's friend and handler, before being shot to death (S01E07).

Homeland's Ayaan is not a child like Issa, but is a youth attending medical school to become a doctor. It is certainly a subjective decision to consider Ayaan a "youth" as opposed to a young man, but his character is primarily defined by his vulnerability and the little power he has over the things that affect his life. As Beier argues, "dimunition of agency" is key to constructions of childhood: "children and youth might be seen to act, but they cannot be read as the autonomous authors of their actions in the same manner as an adult political subject" (2015a: 6). We first meet Ayaan as the survivor of a drone strike on a wedding which kills 40 people,

including Ayaan's family (S04E01). This recalls the prevalence of the theme of "orphanhood and abandonment" which Beier notes is "prevalent in children's literature from the Brothers Grimm to J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*" (2015b: 242); to this I would add one of the greatest children's phenomena of the 20th and 21st centuries: Disney films, in which nearly all of the heroes are orphans or have lost at least one parent (motherless heroines include Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* and Belle in *Beauty in the Beast*; fatherless protagonists include Simba in the *Lion King*; and ophans include Cinderella and Aladdin). This leaves Ayaan's uncle, notorious terrorist leader Haissam Haqqani, as one of his only remaining relatives. Ayaan defends Haqqani as someone whose life has been guided by Islam and "stalwart bravery", and that he was kind to Ayaan as a child, and would make him laugh; Ayaan has also been risking everything to smuggle medicine to a sick Haqqani (S04E05). The CIA is shocked to find that Ayaan is "reasonable" and not "a foaming at the mouth jihadist" (S04E02). This further undermines any possible motivation of anti-American "jihadists", as well as the social and political causes of terrorism. It also reflects the painting of all "Muslims" with a broad brush and expecting that even if not all Muslims are terrorists, they are likely to be unreasonable and backwards.

Ayaan is young, naïve, and vulnerable: he is an easy mark for CIA agent Carrie who quickly earns Ayaan's trust by seducing him and taking his virginity (S04E04). This further establishes Ayaan as youthful and innocent, and Carrie's behaviour draws criticism from her colleagues for sleeping with a "kid". He is largely unaware of the CIA's plot to use him to lead them to Haqqani and is easily convinced by their lies and manipulations. He shows vulnerability in his interactions with Carrie, such as when he shyly asks "Are you still mad at me?" after they have a disagreement about Haqqani (S04E06). Ayaan argues to Carrie that his uncle cares about him and supports his education. However, he is also vulnerable to his uncle's dark side: Haqqani

spots a drone overhead and realizes that Ayaan has led the CIA right to him. He shoots Ayaan in the head, even as he acknowledges that Ayaan has saved his life by bringing him desperately needed medicine (S04E06). As the victim is a passive subject that is acted upon, it requires a counterpart in the form of an aggressor: the violent, barbaric Muslim man. Ayaan's death is particularly senseless because it serves little strategic purpose: the drone has already found Haqqani. However, as a failed father figure, Haqqani is unforgiving of Ayaan's mistakes and punishes him by taking his life. Like Hansel and Gretel who take the witch's invitation to come in for a meal at face value, Ayaan's naïveté (Beier 2015a: 7) and inability to realize how easily Carrie and Haqqani are manipulating him is also characteristic of portrayals of children.

Kenny on *The War at Home* is a vulnerable youth who is betrayed by his parents, but taken in by others. He is a closeted gay Iranian teen who is in love with his best friend, Larry Gold. As discussed in chapter four, Kenny's father disowns him when he comes out as gay (S02E11); he is a child betrayed and abandoned by those who were supposed to be his protectors.[20] His mother is also a victim in this scenario because she wants to see her son but is afraid to go against her husband's decision (S02E17). Dave and Vicky Gold, who are hardly soft-hearted liberals, step in to assume the role of providers and nurturers to Kenny (S02E11-17). In addition to Kenny's parents, society also fails Kenny: because the Golds are not a registered foster family, a social services agent comes to take Kenny away from them, even though everyone agrees that a loving (if dysfunctional) family that Kenny knows is the best place for him (S02E17). Fortunately, Kenny's surrogate providers manage to convince his parents to take

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[20] Other than the betrayal by his parents and his youthful dependence on protectors, Kenny otherwise avoids performing stereotypical Muslim-ness or "Middle Eastern-ness". However, this is mostly accomplished by Kenny's performance of (ostensible, socially constructed) stereotypical homosexuality instead: he loves and is very knowledgeable about musical theatre (S01E03); he is sensitive and writes poetry (S01E11); and he regularly expresses his feelings for Larry in asides to the camera (e.g. S01E01). He is described as "so gay" that he may as well have rainbows coming out of his ears (S02E11).

him back; Kenny's father only acquiesces to avoid Kenny's entry into the foster care system, even while admitting that he still cannot truly accept his son (S02E17). Kenny has very little agency in all of this: although he showed agency in deciding to come out to his parents, he is helpless to prevent his parents from kicking him out and it is but by the grace of the Golds that he has somewhere to stay; it is unclear what would have become of him had they not taken him in. It is also the intervention of other adults/protectors – Dave and Vicky Gold – that Kenny's parents take him back, and there is nothing to suggest that he is less vulnerable than before should his father once again change his mind about his son. As Beier has noted, "references to childhood are, in fact, references to adult-child relationships" which encode "power relations that constitute adults as sociopolitical actors" (2015a: 6). Furthermore, "gendered and racialized legacies of colonialism" come into play regarding the construction of childhood and issues of child security (Beier 2015a: 3). Kenny's rejection by his father reflects the "'backwardness' presumed of societies beyond the global North" (Beier 2015a: 3) through an inability to properly protect childhood innocence and fill a child's developmental needs. Perceptions of the "child as human 'becoming' highlights adult responsibility" (Beier 2015a), and Kenny's parents fail to live up to this responsibility.

Muslim Victims of Western Discrimination

Alsultany discusses the parallel strategies for narrating the logic of exception while also evoking sympathy for the plight of Arabs and Muslims in the context of the "War on Terror" (2012: 16). This trend is characterized by expressing sympathy, mourning, and remorse for hate crimes against and unfair blaming of Arabs and Muslims, claiming these evils of the "War on Terror" as a compromise in American ideals; examples can be found on *The Practice, NYPD Blue,* and *Law and Order* (Alsultany 2012: 49). As discussed in chapter five, patriotic Muslims

are expected to accept violations of their civil rights in light of the "greater good". As such, it should be noted that Muslim-ness as victimhood plays into other "positive" modes of representing Muslims: the "good" patriotic Muslim's arc often involves becoming the victim of Western discrimination. Meanwhile, the "friendly cultural stereotype" character arc also always involves some discrimination based on Muslim-ness, although in the latter case the stakes are lower, such as difficulty fitting in at work or school, rather than illegal detention or torture.

Portraying Muslims as victims of Western discrimination does little to undermine the need for such discriminatory measures, as the number of innocent Muslim individuals who are shown to be unjustly affected by security measures is eclipsed by the much more common performances of Muslim-ness as villainy. Alsultany observed a trend of television programs sympathizing with Arabs and Muslims as unjust victims of harassment in the post-9/11 era (2012: 22-3). However, this mode of performing Muslim-ness is quite uncommon in programs that feature Muslims as recurring characters (11 of 288 cases, or 4%; 20 cases or 7% including victims of Western interference); most examples provided by Alsultany are in programs that feature Muslim characters in one-episode arcs. Interestingly, while the majority of victims of "bad Muslims" discussed above are women, the victims of Western discrimination are mostly male, and two of the most prominent examples are youths – *Homeland*'s Issa and *Sleeper Cell*'s Khashul. As such, these programs do provide commentary on the mobilization of fear in the context of the "War on Terror", but it is interesting that many of the programs highlighted by Alsultany do not otherwise feature Muslims in a sustained way. Furthermore, such sympathetic portrayals of Muslims as innocent victims of Western hysteria present a "revealing discrepancy", as the projection of such "racially sensitive images" is at odds with the "ultimate exclusion of Arab and Muslim Americans from civil rights" and belonging within a reified "American"

identity (Alsultany 2012: 49). Razack also argues that Muslims have been excluded from Western society through legal and political institutions (2008).

Alsultany reminds us that programs can present alternative narratives (i.e. critiquing violations of the human and civil rights of Arabs and Muslims) while still projecting a *preferred meaning* (i.e. showing racist practices as morally wrong, but tragically necessary) (2012: 50). As such, counter-terrorism programs question but do not truly challenge American policies of the "War on Terror" by presenting its violations as temporary aberrations that deviate from the more fundamental norm of racial equality, which will surely prevail (Alsultany 2012: 50). Thus, sympathetic portrayals of Muslims help to justify and normalize a "logic of exception" that frames racist policies within an ostensibly "post-racial" society (Alsultany 2012: 50), constructing the limits of what counts as acceptable or even "respectable" racism (Alsultany 2012: 53). Despite liberal American sympathy for their plight, the bottom line of the "War on Terror" is that it is "reasonable to be suspicious of 'Muslims'" (Alsultany 2012: 54).

Pop culture often conflates racism with patriotism (Alsultany 2012: 66). Even critiques of hate crimes often involve ultimately justifying them if an attack is prevented (Alsultany 2012: 66). Alsultany points to examples in shows like *Law & Order* (Alsultany 2012: 66); the programs studied in this research also provide ample evidence of this. For example, *24* sometimes ponders the ethics of torture, but Jack Bauer's morally questionable tactics always get results. Nevertheless, expressions of remorse do help to relieve the viewer-citizen of blame (Alsultany 2012: 70). In previous research, I made a similar argument that the trend of Israeli films expressing guilt and remorse over the 1982 Lebanon War and the Sabra and Shatila massacre was, in fact, a way of relieving this guilt and resolving the Israeli crisis of national identity that it provoked (Blab 2012).

The clearest example of a portrayal of a Muslim as the unfortunate victim of Western discrimination and harassment is Jibraan Al-Zarian on *24* (S07). Although the season otherwise does not feature Muslim characters, the primary antagonists of the moment decide to frame Jibraan, a young Pakistani day labourer whose visa has expired, as a terrorist (S07E21). The real terrorists do this because Jibraan's "profile" makes him a believable terrorist suspect; all they have to do is plant jihadist propaganda onto his computer and deposit suspiciously large payments into his bank account (S07E22). Jibraan is also targeted because he is *not* involved with any terrorist groups. This lack of a terrorist agenda makes him easier to control: instead of having to persuade him ideologically, they simply threaten his brother, whom Jibraan has been taking care of since their parents died when they were children (S07E21). As evidenced through the love he has for his brother, Jibraan is constructed as a blameless and innocent victim who is targeted by the real villains who are easily able to prey on American assumptions about links between Muslim-ness and terrorism. Especially in the American context, it is also extremely unusual to see such a positive portrayal of an undocumented immigrant. When the counter-terror agents predictably use racial profiling to find their target – which, it should be remembered, is normally narrated as a problematic tactic, but one which is necessary to save lives – they take the bait planted by the terrorists and immediately suspect Jibraan (S07E22). When Jack Bauer interrogates Jibraan's imam, he initially refuses to believe that Jibraan is innocent, but eventually admits his mistake when closer inspection of the evidence suggests that Jibraan may have been framed. Jack realizes that Jibraan was chosen as a target because of how easy it was to believe him guilty. As discussed above, expressing remorse for discrimination helps to relieve the viewer-citizen of guilt over the mistreatment of innocent Arabs and Muslims. Jack is quickly rehabilitated and praised by the imam for having the humility to admit that he was wrong,

especially as most authorities will go to great lengths and even let people die in order to avoid admitting a mistake (S07E22). The injustice of having suspected Jibraan is further underscored by his heroism: he risks his own life and *prevents* the attack which the terrorists attempted to coerce him into committing (S07E23). After having been framed, unjustly accused of being a terrorist, and himself preventing the bombing, Jibraan is awarded a happy ending and is safely reunited with his brother (S07E23). This character arc deviates from the typical performances of Muslim-ness as villainy and even of the patriotic "Good" Muslim, as Jibraan is a moral and good person, but not an American citizen or even a legal resident of the United States. Furthermore, his being an undocumented or "illegal" migrant dramatically deviates from the "Good" Muslim's patriotism and commitment to fighting terrorism: although Jibraan certainly rises to the occasion and heroically save lives, he is not shown to have any particular political inclinations. In sum, in many ways, the characterization of Jibraan Al-Zarian on *24* is one of the more subversive cases of resisting anti-Muslim stereotypes on television. However, his character arc is only three episodes long and the counter-terror agents who suspected him are immediately forgiven (explicitly, by the imam) for their ignorance (S07E22). A much more prominent message of *24*, along with *Homeland* and other counter-terror programs, is that racial profiling *does* usually enable the protagonists to catch guilty Muslims; as such, this incident does little to disrupt larger narratives of the "War on Terror". Indeed, even in this case, suspecting Jibraan did lead to stopping the real terrorists.

Another example of a heroic Muslim who is the victim of Western harassment is Yusuf Auda (see chapter five). Yusuf is a Middle Eastern intelligence agent who, despite being perceived as suspicious by the American counter-terror agents, helps protagonist Jack Bauer to

save the day, but dies tragically and needlessly as he is targeted by bigots who call him racist slurs and beat him to death (S02E19-20).

Conclusion

In sum, although Alsultany (2012) noted an important trend in sympathetic portrayals of Muslims, especially as victims of Western discrimination, this trend is less common in programs that feature Muslims as main and/or recurring characters, and not only in single-episode arcs. Significantly, most victims of Western discrimination against Muslims and of Western interference are male, whereas most victims of "bad Muslims" are women and youths. By far, the most common mode of performing Muslim-ness as victimhood – 41 of 61 cases – is that of victims of patriarchal Islam and Islamic terrorism (or of "bad Muslims"). Following larger political and societal narratives of Muslim women as oppressed, silenced, and veiled, pop culture reproduces the Muslim woman as a typically passive victim of the evils of Islam, Muslim cultures, and Muslim men. Muslim women are often portrayed as victims of rape by villainous Muslim men, as well as of domestic abuse, manipulation, and even murder. Such portrayals of Muslim women are tied to larger narratives about "saving" them, including as a powerful justification for Western military interventions in the Middle East. Furthermore, we must heed the call of Arab and Muslim feminists to resist simplistic assumptions about women and Islam and not to presume that the most visible or sensational features of the lives of Muslim women – such as different types of veiling – are necessarily their most pressing concern. Performances of Muslim-ness as victimhood reflect and reproduce longstanding orientalist narratives that paint the Middle East and Muslim cultures with a broad brush as irredeemably backwards and uncivilized, which thus promote and justify the need for "civilizing" missions by a benevolent West. Portraying Muslim women as passive victims also serves to deny their agency and

"oppress" them further through neo-colonial benevolence and Western intervention. Because stories of how "they" treat "their" women played such a powerful role in past colonialism, and continue to play a crucial role in ongoing imperialism and in the "War on Terror" in particular, we should pay critical attention to performances of Muslim-ness as victimhood.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RESISTING STEREOTYPES

Introduction

Shaheen has argued that the best hope for overcoming negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims is to portray them as regular people (2008). As discussed throughout the dissertation, most Muslim characters on American television programs remain stuck in performing four main tropes of Muslim-ness: the Muslim villain; the "good" Muslim; the friendly cultural stereotype; and the Muslim victim. However, 10% of Muslim characters defy these stereotypes and are presented in a "positive" light. These Muslim characters are "regular" people, which does not necessarily mean that their lives are particularly mundane rather than exciting, or that they are particularly "good" or virtuous, but rather that their Muslim-ness is not the main defining feature of their characters and that they are as complex and nuanced as the non-Muslim characters around them. They are not villains, driven by a backwards interpretation of Islam, nor are they patriotic counter-terror agents whose entire character arcs revolve around merely being Muslims but *not* terrorists. They are not superficial caricatures of friendly foreigners with whom we primarily share the common condition of humanity. Although they might face hardships, they are not primarily defined by being victims of either patriarchal Islam or of Western discrimination – which is certainly not to say that they inhabit a post-racial society.

This chapter discusses some of the most prominent or meaningful examples of non-stereotypical complex Muslim characters: Abed on *Community*; Sayid on *Lost*; Kash and Linda on *Shameless*; Dalia and Kayla Hassan on *24*; Halima and Ru'a on *Tyrant*; Aliyah on *American Crime*; Sadika on *Aliens in America*; and Farah on *Sleeper Cell.*

Community: *Abed*

Community's Abed is one of the most famous and ground-breaking portrayals of Muslim-ness in that, while he is explicitly Muslim and his Muslim-ness occasionally arises as a plot point or biographical background information, this is not the defining feature of his character arc. Abed's main character trait is his obsession with pop culture, which is not specifically informed by his Muslim-ness, just as in the "real" world one's hobbies are not necessarily dictated by one's religion. Abed is not a "regular" person in the normative or "normal" sense of the term: he is socially awkward and is considered strange or "weird" by everyone that knows him, including by his friends. However, Abed is a "regular" person in that this aspect of his character co-exists with but is independent of his Muslim-ness. To contrast Abed with Raja on *Aliens in America*, Raja is weird *because* he is Muslim: because he prays, wears "traditional" Pakistani clothing, and is respectful to his elders and to women, along with everyone he meets, because he follows the strict rules of his religion. As Alsultany notes, "Abed is a weird guy, but his weirdness has nothing to do with his ethnic or religious identity" (2012: 173). Furthermore, despite his father's more "stereotypical" performances of the tropes of being a Muslim and "Middle Eastern" man, including his expectation that Abed would take over the family's falafel business, Abed is a "refreshingly original character, unlike any other portrayal of Arab Americans on network television to date" (Alsultany 2012: 173-4). Of course, it should be noted that although Abed and his father are described as Palestinian, the actors who portray them, Danny Pudi and Iqbal Theba, are, in fact, South Asian: Pudi is an American of Indian and Polish descent, while Theba is Pakistani-American. As such, this casting decision reinforces the constructed notion of what a Muslim or Arab "looks" like, and collapses ethnic differences from North Africa to South Asia.

However, Abed's Palestinian background is rooted in his real-life inspiration, Palestinian-American comedian Abed Gheith, a close friend of show creator Dan Harmon.

Lost: *Sayid*

Lost's Sayid is another famous example of a complex and prominent Muslim character who transcends the standard stereotypes of Muslim-ness, as well as a relatively rare example of a Muslim character who is part of the main cast. Indeed, Shaheen argues that post-9/11 television productions continue to produce the same negative stereotypes about Arabs that he has been discussing for decades, with the lone exception of Sayid on *Lost* (2008: 45). Sayid has a dark past filled with mistakes and questionable behaviour; however, this is typical among characters of the show. Although Sayid has a particularly problematic history of having been a professional and particularly skilled torturer in Iraq, other main characters include people on the run for having committed murder; a con man and serial criminal; a heroin addict; a warlord; and so on. Sayid is tortured by his dark past, but he shares such feelings and identity crises with many other characters. As such, it would also be reasonable to say that Sayid's character has many negative elements but, aside from the ways in which this is consistent with the larger context of the show, *Lost* focuses more on Sayid's selfless good deeds, bravery, and efforts towards redemption.

Sayid is a natural leader and works hard to help to ensure the safety and survival of those stranded on the island from their plane crash. He is exactly the kind of person anyone might want to depend upon in a time of crisis: he is responsible, respectful, pragmatic, and industrious (e.g. S01E03). However, Sayid is in conflict with some of the other main characters, notably Sawyer, whom Sayid tortures when Sawyer (apparently) holds Shannon's medical supplies hostage (S01E08). Sawyer regularly uses racist slurs to address and talk about Sayid, such as "terrorist" (S01E02), "Captain Falafel" (S01E06), or "Al-Jazeera" (S01E03); other characters like and

defend Sayid and point to Sawyer's ignorance, e.g. "Al-Jazeera's a network" (Charlie, S01E03). Sayid also forms friendships with other main characters. Kate trusts Sayid and often turns to him for support and assistance in a friendship that appears to be founded in mutual respect (e.g. S01E08), and she is genuinely concerned when he is missing for a time (S01E10). Hurley, perhaps the kindest and most likable character on the show, is also fond of Sayid and gives the audience opportunities to see a softer side of him (e.g. S01E02). Sayid is haunted by the memory of his lost love, Nadia, a childhood friend whom he met as an adult and was forced to torture; they fell in love and he helped her to escape execution (S01E09). Much of Sayid's arc revolves around his long search to learn if she is still alive and to find her.

On the island, Sayid also finds a love interest in Shannon, although the two seem to be from very different worlds: he, a former torturer and member of the Iraqi Republican Guard, and she, a spoiled rich girl. However, although Shannon apparently has a pattern of finding older men to "take care of her", Sayid sees her strength and potential and encourages her to recognize her own worth (S01E17). His relationship with Shannon allows us to see that Sayid is romantic, thoughtful, caring, and even funny (S02E06). When Shannon is accidentally killed by another islander, Sayid is devasted (S02E06-09). Although his grief stays with him, he continues to work with the others to seek the survival of the people on the island.

Along with others, Alsutany has noted that "representations of Arab and Muslim identities in contexts that have nothing to do with terrorism remain strikingly unusual in the U.S. commercial media" (2012: 28). Even Sayid, one of the most famous portrayals of a "sympathetic" Arab and Muslim character cannot escape this: he cannot avoid connections to terrorism in his backstory, even though the plot involved Sayid helping the CIA stop a terrorist whom he had known as a college roommate (S01E21). Although all of the shows studied take

pains to note that not *all* Muslims are terrorists, it is regularly shown that most Muslims *know* terrorists, which suggests that they could be doing more to fight terrorism, including surveillance within their own communities. However, although Sayid does prevent a terrorist attack, he has little in common with the "Good" Muslim counter-terrorism agents: he does not share their motivations of patriotism and nationalism. Instead, he was coerced into helping the CIA with the promise of learning information about his lost love Nadia. The "Good" Muslim, meanwhile, is unambiguously "good" and moral, and differs greatly from Sayid, whose dark past weighs heavily on his conscience.

Although Sayid is not a terrorist, he was a member of the Iraqi National Guard during the Gulf War, putting him in a position not only of otherness, but specifically opposed to Americans in a time of war. In addition to being on the "wrong" side of the Gulf War, Sayid was a particularly ruthless and effective torturer for the Iraqis, which is a far more damning indictment of his character than simply being an Iraqi soldier, which could be largely explained by circumstances of birth and upbringing. Shaheen laments the lack of portrayals of Arabs as normal people, doing the things that normal Americans do in other shows, such as "going out on picnics, dating, reading the newspaper, having coffee, rushing off to work, embracing one another, being in families" (2008: 47). Sayid is notable as an example of an Arab and Muslim as a leading character on a show, and a portrayal of a nuanced and largely sympathetic character. Although he is not a "normal" person in the mundane sense of the term, we do see him perform many of the above activities, particularly in his relationship with Shannon. Of course, while it should be noted that most of the characters on *Lost* have dark pasts, it is rather disappointing to see an Iraqi as a torturer rather than a florist or a restaurant chef, although Sayid does, at one point, have a false identity as the latter (S03E11).

Shameless: *Kash and Linda*

Shameless's Kash provides one of the least stereotypical performances of Muslim-ness on American television. Although viewer impressions surely vary, Kash is a rather sympathetic, although problematic, character. What is refreshing is that it is not his Muslim-ness that marks his behaviour as problematic. Kash is a recurring character on *Shameless* who leaves the show early in the second season. Kash runs a convenience store with his (White, convert) wife Linda, and his character arc revolves around his affair with young Ian Gallagher, one of the show's main characters. This is particularly problematic because Ian is only sixteen years old, and thus their sexual relationship is technically one of statutory rape. However, the affair is portrayed as affectionate and loving; it is far from the most unseemly sexual relationship on the show, which revolves around the drama and sexual exploits of the members of the Gallagher family.

Although his story draws on some tropes of Muslim-ness, such as Islam and Muslim culture as particularly repressive regarding homosexuality – as Kash hides his homosexuality partly because of his community and cultural background – Kash professes that he did not realize that he was gay until after he was already married to his wife Linda (S01E03). Kash suggests that he maintains the façade of heterosexuality and his marriage because he loves his kids (S01E03). Such a situation is certainly not unheard of in Western societies.

Linda also defies tropes of Muslim-ness. It would not be surprising for Linda to be portrayed as a victim of her husband's infidelity, which some might read as more humiliating because of his homosexuality. However, Linda does not fit any of the tropes of Muslim-ness as victimhood. Although she wears a *hijab* – which is often narratively associated with passivity – she is not meek or submissive. She is spirited, assertive, and attentive to running her business. Linda is tough and far from passive: for example, she wants to be much more assertive about

addressing the store's shoplifting problem and criticizes Kash for doing too little about it, telling him to "grow a pair" (S01E06). Linda's "emasculation" of Kash is a recurring theme in the dynamic between them: "How can a man who has fathered two children have no balls? It's a medical mystery" (S01E07). Linda is rather harsh and unsympathetic to the reasons for Kash's "inaction" on this front, including his having previously been assaulted by both the current shoplifting culprit, Mickey (S01E07), as well as by Mickey's father in the past (S01E06). Although Linda's harshness is certainly related to her strained marriage, it is also refreshing to see a nuanced and flawed character; this is in stark opposition to both the evilness of Muslim villains and the unambiguous "goodness" of patriotic Muslims whose behaviour is always above reproach. She is also serious and pragmatic, wanting to ensure their ability to provide for their family; when Kash tells her to "try some optimism", she retorts that "optimism is for children and presidents, not for mini mart owners in a land of thirty million jobless" (S01E06). Instead, she gets a gun, brings Kash to a shooting range to teach him how to shoot, and herself illustrates a perfect grouping of gunshots in the crotch of a silhouette target (S01E06).

When she learns of Kash's affair with Ian, Linda excoriates her husband and punches Ian in the face (S01E07). She also takes charge of the situation and demands that he get her pregnant with a third child before he can carry on with his affair, as well as demanding that he be discreet so as not to make her the laughing stock of their mosque (S01E07). After Linda becomes pregnant, Kash finds that Ian is having an affair with Mickey, the same boy who had been terrorizing him – shoplifting from the store and assaulting Kash – and finally does the other thing Linda has been pushing him to do: he shoots Mickey (S01E09). Although Kash does not face charges, this is the end of his relationship with Ian; instead, Kash is later seeing having an affair with another Middle-Eastern man who wears a *niqab* to maintain discretion when meeting Kash

(S02E01). Kash and Linda's story arc ends when Kash decides he can no longer keep living a lie and abandons a now very pregnant Linda (S02E01). Although we do not see Linda's reaction to this news, the last we hear of her is that she is continuing to manage the convenience store and has proactively hired Mickey – the source of so many previous problems – as a security guard to limit shoplifting in the store (S02E02).

Kash and Linda on *Shameless* are not easily classified as either "negative" or "positive" characters. Their story arc is a messy tale of infidelity, lies, and confrontations about both their marriage and their business. They are complex and nuanced characters whose Muslim-ness is important in defining their identities and their behaviour, but this is one factor among others. Linda is a Muslim; a devoted mother; the wife of a gay husband who is in love with their teenage employee; and a tough-as-nails storekeeper. Kash is a closeted gay Muslim whose struggles have less to do with the perceived incompatibility of his homosexuality with his religion than his marriage to a woman and his familial and professional responsibilities. Through Kash and Linda, *Shameless* provides one of the most interesting case studies of Muslims who are "normal" people; within the context of the show, their storylines are no less complicated and their actions no less problematic than those of their non-Muslim counterparts.

24: *Dalia Hassan*

Dalia is one of the most interesting female Muslim characters in this corpus. She is the wife of Omar Hassan, President of the Islamic Republic of Kamistan. This fictional Islamic Republic most strongly evokes Iran: the primary political issue between their country and the United States is the dismantling of their nuclear program. President Hassan is a "Good" Muslim – he wants peace and stability for his country and chooses an alliance and relationship-building with the United States to pursue this goal. He also sees himself as bringing "peace to a region

that hasn't known peace" in decades (S08E05). What constitutes the "region" and its obstacles to "peace" remain vague and poorly defined. He represents the docile and obedient colonial subject who "understands" that following the rules of the United States, the reigning imperial superpower, is in everyone's best interests, and that resisting American oversight over his country's policies and resources – the nuclear program in particular – would be a sin of pride that would hurt his people and his country's prospects.

Dalia is his estranged wife who supports her husband's politics, but resents the distance between them and his extramarital affairs. She dutifully plays her role as supportive wife in public, but rejects intimacy in private. Not only is their marriage in a difficult place, but it is revealed that Dalia used to be one of Omar's most trusted advisors, but that he has not sought her counsel in years (S08E05); now, she argues for the value of their treaty with the United States when Omar considers abandoning it (S08E13). After her husband is killed, some in his cabinet choose her to be the interim leader and to take his place at the peace conference, as she supported her husband's project and is herself a respected figure (S08E17-18). Dalia's ascension to a leading political role also provides the opportunity to show that not only does she have strong support among political leaders, but that women are marching in the streets to support her presidency (S08E18). This characterization of Middle-Eastern Muslim women as political actors is quite rare in popular culture, and certainly among the programs studied in this work (with the exception of *Tyrant*). Not only does she perform this role with dignity and competence, Dalia Hassan is a rare example of a "Middle-Eastern" Muslim woman in a leadership role (along with Nadia: *24*, S06; see chapter five). She rises above petty instincts and jealousy (to which characters on the show regularly succumb), and does not dismiss or ignore important information because the source is her husband's mistress. With the help of her daughter, she is very

reasonable in realizing that it would be a difficult thing for her deceased husband's mistress to want to contact her, and concludes that she would only do so for a valid reason. Indeed, she faces a very difficult decision when she learns that the American president hid from her that the Russians with whom she is signing the peace treaty are, in fact, responsible for her husband's assassination (S08E23); this is a particularly shattering revelation for Dalia because she had considered President Allison Taylor "a woman of unparalleled courage and grace" and felt that they were partners in pursuing Omar's vision (S08E19). President Taylor threatens Dalia with a devastating bombing of her country from which it would take decades to recover (S08E23). Nevertheless, Dalia still wants to go to the Hague and reveal the treachery of the American President and the Russians. However, she ultimately makes the difficult and pragmatic decision to swallow her disgust and her pride, and not give Russia and the West (another) pretext to bomb the Middle East (S08E23-24). Thus, although Dalia and Omar have similar beliefs and optimism about allowing American oversight over the dismantling of their nuclear program and signing a peace treaty with many countries under American leadership, it is only Dalia that becomes disillusioned with American lies and betrayal. Nevertheless, she makes a difficult decision that is in the best interest of her people. Although "Good" Muslims often experience the violation of their individual rights, while submitting to this treatment in view of the greater good, Dalia's experience is much darker and much more nuanced than the under-problematized relationships of most "Good" Muslims vis-à-vis the United States.

24: *Kayla Hassan*

Kayla is the daughter of President Omar Hassan and Dalia Hassan of the Islamic Republic of Kamistan. She is cross-listed as a victim because the beginning of her arc reflects a typically gendered victim role: she is easily manipulated by her boyfriend Tarun, her father's

head of security, who turns out to be a terrorist working against him. She is blinded by her love for Tarun and, in an act of youthful rebellion, runs off with him, despite her parents' protests and warnings (S08E08). When Tarun is confirmed to be a villain, her family is unable to warn her because she refuses to answer their calls. Even after she learns that Tarun is a double agent, she is again manipulated into believing that he really does love her and wants to protect her; thinking she is going to safety, she is tricked into driving an EMP (electromagnetic pulse) and explosive device right into the Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU), which nearly kills her and takes out the CTU's equipment, severely damaging efforts to foil the plot of the terrorists (S08E12).

After her father dies and her mother takes over as leader at the peace conference, Kayla appears more mature and focused on the big picture. She gives her mother advice and encourages her to tackle misperceptions by addressing them directly (S08E19). She is also the one first contacted by Meredith Reed, a journalist and her deceased father's mistress, who wants to give Dalia important information about the peace summit and the behaviour of the Americans and the Russians. Although Kayla initially responds with hostility and suspicion – which is understandable because she blames Meredith for contributing to her parents' estrangement – she believes that Meredith would not otherwise contact Omar's family. She convinces Dalia to hear Meredith's information that the Russians were behind Omar's assassination (S08E23). While not as developed a character as her mother, Kayla Hassan resists stereotypes of female "Muslim-ness" by boldly pursuing a relationship against her parents' wishes – although this turns out to be ill-advised – and eventually acting as a mature counsellor to her mother.

Tyrant: *Halima*

Tyrant's Halima also defies stereotypes. She is part of the resistance fighting the corrupt dictator that oppresses her people in the fictional Middle-Eastern country of Abbudin. She

participates in street graffiti, calling for the release of imprisoned protagonist Bassam "Barry" Al-Fayeed (S02E01), as well as to "Free Abbudin". Halima is initially strongly opposed to violent resistance, arguing that "all violence brings is more violence" (S02E03). Although she works on a culture and tourism campaign, for which she impressed First Lady Leila Al-Fayeed, Halima risks not only this position but her own safety by bravely and publicly calling out Leila for the government's gas attack on the city of Ma'an, in which her sister was killed; she even throws blood on Leila while she is in the middle of a photo-op (S02E03). Perhaps particularly because Leila knows and likes Halima, this does have a strong effect on her. Halima also goes on to fight with the armed resistance in Ma'an, fighting against the "Caliphate" and the terror they have spread (S02E06), and suggests that they ally themselves with the Christians in Ma'an (S02E07). Halima is courageous and refuses to give up, affirming that she will not stop fighting for her people until she is dead. After Barry says he is done fighting, she is involved in getting together a rally that she describes as five thousand people calling for Jamal to step down and Barry to become president (S02E12). Although Halima is not a major character, she is an encouraging example of how a "regular" person – she is not a counter-terror agent or a soldier – can courageously speak truth to power and fight for what she believes is right, without (apparently) subscribing to a simplistic ideology.

Tyrant: *Ru'a*

Ru'a is part of a female militia resisting the Caliphate in the city of Ma'an; they are all that is left of the resistance, until Barry shows up (S02E06). Ru'a and the other women directly oppose portrayals of Muslim women as docile victims. They also play on the backwards misogyny of the terrorists who are not afraid to die, but are afraid to be killed by a woman and sometimes run away from them: "Do you know what terrifies the Caliphate more than anything?

A girl with a gun. Women are such lowly beings to them. They think if they're killed by one, they won't go to paradise" (S02E06). Not only is Ru'a fearless in the face of danger, she is also good-natured, confident, and fun. She regularly defies stereotypes and expectations, even teaching Barry's son how to hold a gun (S02E09). Although her courting of Barry's gay son Sammy is based on heteronormative assumptions – he seems to like her, so she assumes this implies romantic prospects – her decision to kiss him because she got tired of waiting for him to do so (S02E09) is certainly in opposition with stereotypes of timid Muslim women who are controlled by overbearing men. Not only does she save Sammy's life in a gunfight, she also encourages and inspires him; he is sure to grieve her loss after she is killed before his eyes, with her final actions having been to protect him and declare her affection for him (S02E09). Despite being killed by Caliphate fighters, Ru'a does not perform the trope of Muslim-ness as victimhood because she is not a passive and tragic victim, but rather dies the death of a warrior: brave, competent, and principled to the end.

American Crime: *Aliyah*

American Crime explicitly deals with questions of race and racism. Aliyah is a Black Muslim convert who actively engages in challenging racism as part of her dual identity as an African-American and as a Muslim. She advocates for her brother Carter, who is not a Muslim, and who has been arrested for murder, a charge which she believes is unfounded. To do this, she enlists the help of Brother Timothy, a lawyer who works for a "cause, not a dollar" (S01E03). Aliyah is a devout Muslim who wears a *hijab* and feels that she found "freedom" through Islam (S01E04). She and other members of the African-American Muslim community fight the systemic racism of the legal system, including the specific fact that the (White) family of the deceased argue that race was a motivating factor, citing anti-White racism (S01E0). It is also

among the African-American Muslim community that Aliyah is able to raise bail money for Carter, which is forfeit after he violates the conditions of his bail (S01E05-06). She desperately tries to push her brother to leave his life of crime and drug addiction, including trying to separate him from his girlfriend (S01E04), but also regrets being too judgmental and not compassionate enough (S01E06). Aliyah organizes a rally to peacefully protest her brother's trial, which is the target of bomb threats and racist remarks (S01E08). Aliyah's Muslim community is portrayed very positively, including preaching the importance of forgiveness and resisting hatred, despite the anti-Black and anti-Muslim racism to which they are often subjected (S01E11). Aliyah defies stereotypes because she is a well-intentioned but flawed character, as evidenced by her harshness towards her brother and her misguided efforts to separate Carter and his girlfriend. Furthermore, contrary to the "good", patriotic Muslim's unwillingness to criticize "America", Aliyah is actively engaged in challenging systemic racism in the United States; this is informed by her lived experience as both a Muslim and as a Black woman.

Aliens in America: *Sadika and Mrs. Sadaqatmal*

Although a fairly minor role, Sadika Sadaqatmal on *Aliens in America* is refreshing as a portrayal of a Muslim teen who wears a *hijab* but does not perform stereotypical tropes of Muslim-ness; she seems like a "normal" person, while being Muslim. She serves as a love interest for Raja, the Pakistani exchange student who is one of the show's main characters. She likes Raja, but he is so "traditional" that he is not comfortable kissing – even on the cheek – or holding hands while dating (S01E18). Sadika – who feels that she's both a Muslim and Western girl but does not fully belong to either world (S01E18) – presumably expects more in a relationship, although by American standards she would probably not be considered "wild" or "rebellious". She is eventually seen dating a (White) American boy, with whom she might share

more similar cultural expectations about dating. This is somewhat problematic in that it portrays "American-ness" as a modernizing influence: Sadika, who has been living in the United States for some years (it is not clear at what point her family immigrated, or if she is American-born), even though she is a very minor character, appears – to an audience with "Western" sensibilities – to be a reasonable, well-rounded, and modern person. Raja, meanwhile, is a recent arrival from Pakistan and, even though he is a major character with much more screentime than Sadika, primarily reflects the trope of the "Friendly Cultural Stereotype", performing odd but amusing and non-threatening difference.

Sadika's mother, a still more minor character, also seems more like a "regular" person than a stereotype. Her family has also taken in an exchange student – an athletic, blond, German boy named Silvio. Silvio is the very model of the kind of exchange student the Tolchuks hoped would make protagonist Justin "cool" by association, but they instead received the "lemon" that is Raja. While there are some cultural clashes between Silvio and the Sadaqatmal family because, like many Western teen boys, Silvio is interested in swearing, drinking alcohol, and dating girls – the kind of "normal" behaviour Raja's host mom, Mrs. Tolchuk, longs for – Mrs. Sadaqatmal has striven to do anything and everything she can to make Silvio feel at home, including cooking German food and inviting over German friends and acquaintances (S01E14). Mrs. Sadaqatmal's example makes Mrs. Tolchuk more culturally sensitive and she organizes a dinner with Pakistani food and their new friends (S01E14). Not only is Mrs. Sadaqatmal's behaviour in contrast with the Tolchuks' poorer treatment of Raja – considering him "weird" and being mad at him for getting them kicked off their flight because he prayed in the airport, instead of being outraged on his behalf – it is also in contrast with Kenny's mom (when we first meet

her) on *The War at Home*, who performs more of a slapstick comedic role with her funny accent, broken English, strange food, and strict rules (*The War at Home*, S01E08).

In sum, although Sadika and her mother are quite minor characters, the audience is given the impression that, although they may navigate complicated dual identities, they balance Muslim-ness and Western-ness and can adapt to "Western" culture without abandoning their own. Indeed, this is in contrast with the much more backwards Americans on the show who are very ignorant about non-American culture. The dominant tropes of Muslim-ness make it difficult to imagine a dual Muslim and American subject, as most Muslim characters are either villains who hate America; victims; caricatures of foreign oddities; or counter-terror agents whose loyalty to America is constantly questioned. Through Sadika and her mother, *Aliens in America* portrays Muslim-Americans outside of the high-stakes context of terrorism and counter-terrorism – and instead as regular people whose lives revolve around issues like family and dating – and thus helps to normalize the notion of Muslims as "normal" people who live among us and with whom we might have pleasant interactions in our daily lives.

Sleeper Cell: *Farah*

Like Sadika on *Aliens in America*, *Sleeper Cell*'s characterization of Farah is somewhat problematic as it implies that Americanized Muslims are more likely to seem like "regular" people – according to a Western conceit. It is important to remember that what is "normal" is based in normative assumptions and is culturally contingent. Another example of Americanized Muslims being considered as more "like us" is Nadia on *24*, whose Muslim-ness is defended on the grounds that she has been living in the United States since infancy and is a registered Republican (see chapter five). However, Farah is notable as a portrayal of a "normal" Muslim

who has no connection to terrorism and has interests that are not purely defined by her Muslim-ness, such as her interest in soccer.

We meet Farah because she has been set up to go on a date wtih Salim, the (unbeknownst to her) closeted gay British-Iraqi Muslim terrorist (see chapter four). Farah is beautiful and, not only does she not wear a *hijab*, but she dresses in a way that is more "sexy" than conservative; as such, an initial impression based on her appearance makes her more legible to an American audience as "American" rather than Muslim. Although she identifies as a Muslim, she drinks alcohol, eats at non-halal restaurants, and volunteers her time coaching women's soccer at a Muslim youth camp (S02E03). This characterization of Farah challenges assumptions about Muslims and reminds us that, just like in any other religious group, individuals adhere to some religious rules and not others (e.g. keeping kosher and observing Shabbat for Jewish people; attending mass on Sunday and fasting for Lent for Christians; and so on). She is also ideologically open-minded, which clashes with Salim's rigid ideology – she brings him to listen to a popular televangelist Imam who preaches about brotherhood and tolerance between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims (S02E04). This enrages Salim, who considers Shi'a Muslims to be heretics; he nearly murders the Imam, but is stopped by protagonist Darwyn. Even aside from Salim's homosexuality, Farah could never find a good match with someone like him, because she is liberal, open-minded and "modern" (read Americanized/Westernized), and Salim is too backwards and brutish, verbally assaulting her with misogynistic slurs, even when he is not raging about the Imam's contravention of his religious ideology: he calls her a whore and says that she "dress[es] Western" (S02E04). Although there is no room for Farah in a show about backwards Muslim terrorists, she is a brief reminder that our world is also populated by Muslims who are "regular" people – neither terrorists nor patriotic counter-terrorism agents.

Ethical ambiguity and resistance to stereotypes

There are also encouraging examples of Muslim characters who are neither villains nor heroes, but who are nuanced or ambiguous in ways that are consistent with the contexts of the programs on which they are featured. The following characters are difficult to classify as "positive" representations of Muslims, but they do not fit into any of the stereotypical molds of "Muslim-ness", and their ambiguity and complexity is typically similar or in line with that of their non-Muslim counterparts. These nuanced Muslim characters include Yousaf Rana on *The Americans*, Dembe Zuma on *The Blacklist*, and Brother Mouzone on *The Wire*.

The Americans: *Yousaf Rana*

Yousaf is a fairly sympathetic character who, like most sympathetic Muslim characters, is distinguished as less "traditional" and more socially "progressive" than his counterparts. Indeed, he is targeted because he does *not* have a strong religious identity and likes American women; he is thus deemed an easy target for seduction by Annelise, an American woman who has also been seduced and manipulated by one of the protagonist Soviet spies in order to work for them (S02E10). However, it would be difficult to make the argument that his portrayal is "positive", as one of his earliest actions in the show is to strangle and murder Annelise – whom he cares for – the moment she reveals that she has been spying on him, but that she has truly fallen in love with him in the process (S03E01). In most contexts, this would place Yousaf in the category of "villain", but the larger context of *The Americans* includes spies who are nuanced and somewhat sympathetic characters, but whose actions are also highly problematic, including the fact that they regularly manipulate and kill people. Yousaf's actions are impulsive and regrettable, but comprehensible, and the protagonists of the show would have likely behaved similarly had they been in his position: protagonist Philip admits to Yousaf that the position they put him in was

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"unfair" (S03E02). Although Annelise's death was not intended, the protagonists help Yousaf cover up the murder and dispose of the body. Thus, they achieve their desired leverage over him in order to extract information that will aid Soviet endeavours in Afghanistan (S03E02). The rest of Yousaf's arc is about his role as unwilling double-agent and source of information for the Soviet spies; being counselled to pretend to be more religious than he really is in order to safeguard his position (S03E05); as well as his regret over Annelise's fate (S03E11). In sum, although Yousaf cannot be classified as a "positive" representation, per se, he is humanized and sympathetic as an individual who is placed in a difficult position and who is the victim of the machinations of Soviet spies who will use any methods necessary to achieve their ends.

The Blacklist: *Dembe Zuma*

The Blacklist's Dembe Zuma is another character who does not easily fit into any of the major tropes discussed in this research. He is the security guard and right-hand-man of notorious super criminal Raymond "Red" Reddington. Dembe is introduced as an "ex-Freedom Fighter from South Sudan" (S01E02). However, he is originally from Sierra Leone, where, when he was a young child, his entire family was murdered by the Mombasa Cartel, who also abducted him and abused him in many ways, including forcing him into prostitution until the age of 14. At this point, he was considered "too old, too tall, too angry and dangerous to be of any further value" and thus left to die (S02E06). He ended up in a brothel in Nairobi, from which he was saved by Red, who has since seen to his welfare and his education, including acquiring a degree in English literature and the ability to speak many languages (S02E06). Because of this, Dembe has a life debt to Red and serves him faithfully, regularly risking his life as needed to ensure Red's protection. It would be reasonable to describe Dembe's characterization as "negative" because he works for Red, a complex but ruthless criminal, which often involves killing people and other

unethical behaviour, such as participation in the drug trade (S01E20). However, Dembe is also portrayed as sympathetic. He is a survivor of human trafficking (S01E02; S02E06) and sometimes saves lives (S01E05). He is not interested in taking revenge against those who hurt him, arguing that it would serve "no purpose", which prompts Red to describe Dembe as a "good man" (S02E06). Otherwise, although he is regularly present on the show, he typically speaks little and his role mainly involves quiet assistance to Red.

The Wire: *Brother Mouzone*

Brother Mouzone cannot be considered a "positive" character because he is a professional killer who is responsible for the deaths of many people. However, like Yousaf on *The Americans*, it is important to note that, within the larger context of *The Wire*, which features many complex and nuanced characters who engage in crime and other morally problematic activities, including murder, Brother Mouzone is not beyond the pale. In fact, he is arguably more honourable than most criminals, and portrayed quite sympathetically.

Mouzone is a member of the Nation of Islam – hence, why he is called "Brother" – and he is always dressed in a suit and bowtie, which immediately distinguishes him from other characters in the surrounding context of gang violence in Baltimore. He clashes with his counterparts along class lines in other ways as well: he is very dignified and well spoken, and is very literate, reading *Harper's, The Atlantic, The Republic,* and *The Nation*; he argues that the most dangerous thing in America is a Black man who reads (S02E10). Within the context of the program, Mouzone is portrayed favourably in a number of ways. Before he even appears on the show, his upcoming arrival is heralded dramatically: he is a figure that instills fear and deference, as he is widely known as an uncommonly effective hired killer (S02E09). Second – although this certainly does not justify a life of killing – Brother Mouzone takes no particular

pleasure in killing, and respects the rules of "the game". According to this sense of honour, he forms an interesting relationship with Omar Little, another of the show's most nuanced, sympathetic, and popular characters. Stringer Bell, a major character, tries to have Mouzone killed by convincing Omar that Mouzone was responsible for the brutal torture and murder of Omar's boyfriend Brandon. Mouzone, shot by Omar and not begging or pleading, tells Omar that such brutality is not his style, and that Omar is misinformed (S02E11). Recognizing his integrity and seeing that Mouzone has no reason to lie, particularly not so calmly, Omar believes him and calls 911 (S02E11). The two go on to kill Stringer Bell together (S03E11); as such, even though Mouzone is a relatively minor character in terms of screen time, he plays a crucial role in the arcs of two major characters, Omar Little and Stringer Bell. Overall, Brother Mouzone is an interesting character that resists stereotypes about Muslim-ness because although his Muslim-ness is part of his background, it is not the only thing that defines him: Mouzone is one of the show's more nuanced and sympathetic characters. Although his biography – a killer embedded in gang violence – does not reflect the kind of regular or everyday Muslim person that Shaheen had in mind when he called for better representations of Muslims, within the universe of *The Wire*, Brother Mouzone is indeed a strong example of a non-stereotypical Muslim character who is no less complex than his non-Muslim counterparts.

Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, there are a number of encouraging examples of performances of complex and very human Muslim-ness in popular culture. However, Muslim characters that do not primarily perform stereotypes or tropes of Muslim-ness accounted for only 25% of Muslim characters on American programs that featured Muslims as main or recurring characters from 2001 to 2015. Of this, 6% were exceedingly minor or underdeveloped characters

who do not perform stereotypes, but do not have any character traits whatsoever. Nine per cent remain "negative" portrayals of Muslims; most are individuals who are not sympathetic but who fall short of being "terrorists" or even "villains". However, some of these are interesting and nuanced characters, examples of which were discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is primarily among the 10% of "Miscellaneous – positive" characters that we find examples of the uncommon possibility for Muslims to be "regular" and complex people, developed characters who are not defined as either unambiguously "bad" or "good" – like most Muslim characters – but rather are nuanced and multi-faceted individuals who face obstacles, make decisions, form relationships, and make mistakes. These more fully-realized characters provide important resistance to the dominant trend of portraying Muslims as terrorists and villains, and to less common trends of representing Muslims as patriotic and loyal to the United States; as victims; or as non-threatening caricatures of cultural differences. As Shaheen has argued (2008), "progress" in challenging stereotypical representations of Arab and Muslim characters must happen through the portrayal of Muslims as "regular" people or, as I have argued in this chapter, as characters who are not solely defined by their "Muslim-ness" and who are no less nuanced or complex than their non-Muslim counterparts. Thus, such representations are an important site of resistance to reductionist stereotypes about Muslims. It is crucial for such representations to transcend the Good/Bad dichotomy as "positive" representations often remain one-dimensional (e.g. Muslims who are victims rather than villains; patriotic Muslims who are opposed to terrorism and loyal to the United States, but whose personalities are not developed further). However, it is important to remember that these instances of resistance to stereotypes are relatively rare and largely overshadowed by the greater prominence of both "negative" and "positive" tropes of Muslim-ness.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

Introduction

Muslim-ness in American pop culture is usually performed according to one or more of four tropes: the villain/terrorist; the patriotic "Good" Muslim; the Friendly Cultural Stereotype; and the victim (of Western discrimination or of "backwards" Muslim-ness). Although "negative" and "positive" representations are split nearly down the middle, the performativity of Muslim-ness is much more complex than whether we are seeing an increase or a decrease in the presence of Muslim villains which has, in fact, stayed quite stable with counter-terrorism thrillers regularly overlapping and replacing each other, including the hugely successful programs *24* (2001-10; 2014) and *Homeland* (2011-ongoing[21]).

Performances of Muslim-ness are heavily racialized and gendered, with the majority (70%) being "Middle-Eastern" males. Women are under-represented in every group except for that of Muslims who perform the trope of victimhood, of which nearly half are women; 78% of Muslims who are victims of "bad" or backwards Muslim-ness are women (54%) and youths (24%). Additionally, women make up almost half (5 of 11) of White Muslim terrorists.

The largest category of Muslim men is that of one-dimensional villains with poorly defined rationales for engaging in terrorism and other violent and misogynistic behaviour. The counterpoint to the Muslim terrorist is the "good" Muslim who is blindly patriotic and loyal to the United States and dedicated to fighting terrorism, but who is scarcely more complex a character than the Muslim terrorist. The "good" Muslim lacks nuance and depth; there is little opportunity for Muslims to be critical of American policies, but not be terrorists. The Friendly Cultural Stereotype, meanwhile, is a "positive" but superficial characterization that also attempts to counter the stereotype of the Muslim villain, but who largely remains a caricature and a

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[21] As of 2017.

walking joke about cultural differences. The Muslim victim excites sympathy but lacks agency: Muslim women and youths are seen as in need of "saving" from their backwards misogynistic and homophobic culture, while Muslims can also be victimized by the regrettable (but necessary) security measures that the United States and other Western countries put in place in order to fight terrorism.

As discussed in chapter three, this research is not interested in the intentionality of show creators, but rather in distinguishing elements that reflect and reinforce a worldview that (re)circulates negative and reductionist views of Muslims. This is partly because intentionality is difficult to assess – not least because of the large number of people that are involved in the production of television programs and the performances of Muslim-ness therein – and because the intentionality of creators does not necessarily correspond with how their work may be read by audiences. Many possible instances of resistance within these programs are undone by larger narratives that engage in meaning-making about Muslims; for example, both *24* and *Homeland* raise questions about racial profiling, but the bottom line of both programs is that racial profiling of Muslims usually *does* help to protect Americans from terrorist attacks. Although *Homeland* raises questions about drone strikes and highlights the fact that drone strikes *do* sometimes kill civilians, it also consistently frames drone strikes as an imperfect tool but necessary evil of the "War on Terror": the stakes are too high to *not* use counter-terrorism security measures because the alternatives are so much worse. *Sleeper Cell* and *The Grid* remind us that Muslims can be of many different ethnic, national, and cultural origins, but project the idea that what unites them is that Muslim men (and some women) are prone to violence and extremism. However, there is also resistance to tropes of Muslim-ness when Muslim characters are presented as "regular people", or nuanced individuals who are as complex as their non-Muslim counterparts.

Resistance

As discussed in chapter eight, approximately 10% of portrayals of Muslims are "positive" *and* avoid the dominant tropes studied in this research: this is a very important site of resistance to reductionist stereotypes about Muslims. Reductionist stereotypes of Muslims are related to foreign policies, including of the "War on Terror" and, most recently, President Trump's efforts in 2017 to limit the ability of Muslims from various countries to immigrate or travel to the United States. Likewise, pop culture assists us in understanding "real life" resistance to these policies and can even be seen as helping to open some of these spaces of resistance. While large segments of the American population support Trump's moves in limiting immigration (Scott 2017), we are also witnessing resistance to xenophobic policies at a number of sites, including through mass mobilizations as well as televised satire and critique on programs such as *Saturday Night Live, The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, Full Frontal with Samantha Bee,* and *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver,* as well as in more "mainstream" news sources. Resistance is also taking place at some of the highest levels of the American political and judicial systems in blocking (or seeking to block; at time of writing it is too early to tell how the political situation will play out) Trump's executive order limiting immigration from selected Muslim-majority countries (Allen et al. 2017). There is also resistance at the transnational level, such as in German Chancellor Angela Merkel's critiques of Trump's policies (Worley 2017). Nuanced and humanizing portrayals of Muslims in pop culture are part of (re)creating webs of meaning that make it possible to challenge dominant political actors and foreign policy.

Alsultany reminds us that:

Racism is endlessly flexible; resentment of the Other can be easily stoked; stereotyped assumptions are difficult to overcome. Perhaps the emergence of honest, and varied, and

human portrayals of Arabs and Muslims would make little difference in a country, and a

world, attuned to prejudice. (2012: 177; original emphasis)

Nevertheless, she continues, television can have powerful effects on its viewers and could "compel an audience to reject the logics that legitimize the denial of human rights" (2012: 177). Alsultany is particularly hopeful about comedies such as *Aliens in America, Community, Whoopi,* and Canada's *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, which she argues might challenge the simplified complex representations that are (re)produced when storytelling about Muslims remains tied to the context of the "War on Terror" (2012: 171). Like Shaheen, she emphasizes the importance of portraying Muslims in contexts and storylines that are not about terrorism (2012: 171). However, we should be wary of the capacity of one medium to influence views, especially one so "shaped by advertising dollars and therefore governed by the unyielding pull of the lowest common denominator" (Alsultany 2012: 177).

Morey and Yaqin argue that while "the framing of Muslims is still endemic in political and media representations, … the space for other articulations *is* being carved out", but instead of looking to mainstream television for such resistance, they argue that this is occurring mostly "beyond the gaze of Western power elites, in the ruminations of Muslim bloggers and web users and in everyday practices" (2011: 17). However, they do note the importance of shedding light on the "mainstream stereotyping of Muslims" because, they argue, "it is only through honest self-scrutiny and a consideration of our practices" that we can move forward (2011: 17). The present work has aimed to undertake such scrutiny.

Morey and Yaqin note the tenacity of negative and reductionist framings of Muslims, and that despite a growing awareness about Islam and Muslim cultures in Western society, suspicion and hostility towards Muslims has steadily endured, if not increased (2011: 208). Tropes of the

"War on Terror", such as discourses of the Muslim "traitor in our midst", have remained prominent (Morey & Yaqin 2011: 210). Because of the long-running endurance of Muslim stereotypes, of which Shaheen has studied decades of such representations in both cinema and television, we cannot wait for stereotypes to fade on their own (2008: 55). We cannot buy into the myth of a post-racial society in which racist stereotypes are seen as aberrations, according to which we expect them to soon become relics of the past. On the contrary, racism is a central feature of our society.

Despite the important openings for resistance, the majority (75%) of Muslim characters *do* perform tropes of Muslim-ness, and over half of these are villains and terrorists. Muslims and Arabs were mostly presented in negative and reductionist ways before 9/11 and the "War on Terror". Since 2001, the trends of representations of Muslims have included both negative and "positive" stereotypes. Although *24* is most often pointed to as a particularly problematic "shoot-'em-up" counter-terror show, *Homeland* has followed in its footsteps of portraying Muslims as terrorists (and, at best, "positive" stereotypes). Indeed, *24* was known for featuring terrorists of many different national, racial, and religious backgrounds (featuring Muslim villains in seasons 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9), whereas all five seasons of *Homeland* that had aired up to 2016 feature Muslim terrorists. In fact, only 13 of 64 (20%) of Muslim characters on *Homeland* do *not* perform stereotypes; half of these are characters who are so minor that their characters remain neutral and do not break stereotypes, either. Only 3 of 64 characters (5%) on *Homeland* are "positive" portrayals that transcend stereotypes; they are all fairly minor characters (with the possible exception of Aasar Khan) and they all appear only in the fourth season of *Homeland*, which was set primarily in Pakistan. Thus, these positive and non-stereotypical Muslim characters are all non-Arab Muslims. Other prominent "positive" portrayals of non-Arab Muslims include Raja on

Aliens in America, who is Pakistani, and Arastoo on *Bones* and Nasim on *Whoopi*, who are Iranian. Although "Muslim-ness" has been taken as the most important feature of the groups that are racialized as "other" and likely to be involved in terrorism, the collapsing of Arab-ness with Muslim-ness in racist stereotypes persists. More positive or nuanced portrayals of Muslims are often of non-Arabs, including the Pakistani characters noted above, as well as the tendancy of *Homeland* and other programs to give greater attention, screentime, and nuance to its White Muslim villains (e.g. Nicholas Brody and Aileen Morgan on *Homeland*; the Al-Harazi family on *24*). Additionally, while it is difficult to find examples of (explicitly) Christian Arab characters on American television, some of the most prominent positive cinematic representations of Arabs are of Christian Arabs: a notable example is the 2009 film *Amreeka*, which was an American-Canadian-Kuwaiti co-production that follows a Christian Palestinian family that has immigrated to the United States.

<u>Future Research</u>

Ongoing and Upcoming American Television Programs

It would be difficult to claim that portrayals of Muslims are improving over time or tending towards reflecting a larger presence of nuanced and non-stereotypical Muslim characters. *ABC*'s *Designated Survivor* premiered in 2016 and has received significant attention and acclaim for its portrayal of a prominent Muslim character in the role of the White House Press Secretary (played by Kal Penn); it also features another familiar face for viewers of counter-terrorism thrillers, as it stars Kiefer Sutherland, best known as *24*'s principal hero, Jack Bauer.[22] However, it appears that there is likely to be no shortage of portrayals of Muslim villains and terrorists in the near future of American television. *Homeland* is set to air for another three seasons from

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[22] At time of writing, it was too early to make any pronouncements on *Designated Survivor*'s portrayal of Muslims, as the first season had not yet finished airing.

2017 onward; as the most prominent show to feature Muslims in recent years, there is no particular reason to expect a significant change in its portrayals of Muslims, which were quite consistent during its first five seasons. However, it will be worthwhile in future research to explore *Homeland*'s portrayals of Muslims in its final seasons. Similarly, *Tyrant*'s third and final season that aired in 2016 will be of interest to future research and extensions of this research corpus. Counter-terrorism programs remain popular; *Homeland* is currently joined by ABC's *Quantico* which premiered in 2015 and was renewed for a second season in 2016[23], as well as *24: Redemption*, a spin-off of *24* following a new protagonist – a war hero and ex-Army Ranger – which premiered in February 2017 and focuses on Islamic terrorists as its primary antagonists. Additionally, the 2017 revival of *Prison Break* is set in Yemen and will deal primarily with the ongoing war in Yemen, with an emphasis on the role of ISIS/Daesh. As 2017 features no fewer than four programs that focus on Islamic terrorism (*Homeland, Quantico, 24: Redemption, Prison Break*), a significant deviation from the trends of portraying Muslim-ness seems unlikely to occur in the near future. However, it will be worthwhile to explore the ways in which dynamics of performing Muslim-ness are challenged and maintained in these programs, particularly because these thrillers have wide popular appeal and thus significant reach and impact on audiences.

Cross-Country Comparisons

Canadian television would also be an interesting site of popular culture to study and to allow a comparative analysis with the research conducted in this dissertation. Canada shares a number of political and societal differences and similarities with the United States. For example, along with nationalist rhetoric that contrasts Canada's approach to diversity and immigration as a

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[23] As such, *Quantico* falls outside of the scope of this research because it had not aired a full season by the end of 2015.

cultural "mosaic" rather than a "melting pot", official discourse since the election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in October 2015 has focused on inclusion and openness to welcoming refugees (e.g. Austen 2017). However, Trudeau's Liberal government has also been criticized for doing too little in the face of the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, along with other criticisms of its foreign policy towards the Middle East, including the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, despite the Saudi role in the conflict in Yemen (Chase 2016). Like the United States, Canadian politics has also seen a rise in xenophobic nationalism through political figures such as Kellie Leitch, the Member of Parliament who proposed the "barbaric cultural practices" hotline in 2015 and who has been promoting Trump-style politics as part of her bid for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada in 2016-17 (Wherry & Patriquin 2015; Minsky 2017). Canada has also seen the rise of hate crimes against Muslims, including the worst shooting Canada has seen in many years, in which a White shooter opened fire on Muslims praying in a Mosque in Québec City (Williams 2017). It is important to note that although the American context certainly has an important effect on Canadian politics, these trends should certainly not be reduced to a "Trump effect" as they reflect both the broader global context and other features of Canadian politics and society such as narratives of multiculturalism and deeply-rooted elements of Canadian and Québecois nationalism. As such, Canadian popular culture would also be an interesting site at which to explore representations of Muslims, including on fictionalized television programs featuring Muslims such as *The Border* (2008-10) and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (2007-12), as well as on reality TV shows such as the controversial *Border Security: Canada's Front Line* (2012-14). Another potential site of study is that of satirical programs such as *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* (1993-present) and *The Beaverton* (premiered November 2016).

Israeli television would also be an interesting site at which to study the mediation of the "War on Terror" because of its close links with the United States, as well as its status as the only country in the Middle East to not have a majority Muslim population. Israel's relationship with the Arab world is also unique because of the conditions of its creation, past Israeli-Arab wars, and Israel's ongoing military occupation of Palestinian territories and tense relations with other countries of the Middle East and Arab world. Pertinent Israeli television programs include *Hatufim* or *Prisoners of War* (2010-12); *Hatufim* would be particularly interesting to study as *Showtime*'s *Homeland* is a remake of this program. This parallel would allow an interesting comparative analysis. Other programs of note include *Fauda*, which premiered in Israel in late 2015 and premiered on the streaming service *Netflix* in late 2016. *Fauda* has been the recipient of critical acclaim and is framed as presenting a nuanced and two-sided approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Doyle 2016). Because of the many differences in their geopolitical contexts, as well as alliances between the United States and Israel – including in the context of the "War on Terror" – a comparison of American and Israeli counter-terror thrillers could be a fruitful area of research.

Other Areas of Research

It would also be worthwhile to further explore the affective power of music in storytelling in popular culture, such as in television and cinema. As briefly noted in chapter four, the aesthetic turn of IR has included some moves to take music and sound seriously in the study of popular culture and world politics (e.g. Attali 1985; Pasler 2008; Franklin 2005; Davies and Franklin 2015). Although it fell outside of the scope of this research to address the role of music, future research on musical tropes that reinforce or subvert stereotypes would be an interesting topic for future study. Music and sound effects are an important element of audiovisual forms of

storytelling and play a crucial role in stimulating the emotions of the viewer. Without music, horror films cease to frighten and epic films fail to raise spirits. Likewise, musical cues – along with other indicators such as costuming decisions – play a key role in implying whether a character is "good" or "evil", sympathetic or antagonistic. Close attention to the role of music and sound surrounding performances of Muslim-ness in popular culture would be an interesting area for future research.

Another very important element that fell outside the scope of this research is the political economy aspect of the (re)production and (re)circulation of stereotypes about Muslims. The militarisation of Hollywood has been the focus of some research (e.g. Der Derian 2009/2001 on the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network, or MIME-NET; Weldes & Rowley 2015; Robb 2004). It would be valuable to conduct further research on the political economy of the American television industry in order to learn more about the corporations involved; the profits made; the domestic and global reach and consumption of program; as well as possible government and military involvement in the production of these programs, particularly among counter-terror thrillers. Such a study would be useful for providing further context to situate the (re)production of stereotypes about Muslims and the "War on Terror".

Conclusion

This dissertation has shown that while television can be a place of resistance to stereotypical representations of Muslims, it also remains a site where stereotypes – positive and negative – continue to abound. The fear-mongering and reductionist rhetoric about Muslims that has been characteristic of the "War on Terror" has not lost its social and political currency: one need only look at the 2016 American presidential election or international debates about the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015-16 to see that narratives about Muslim-ness and terrorism – along

with narratives about Muslims as patriots and as victims – are reflected in and reflective of the Muslims we see on fictional television programs.

This research is important and relevant to the study of International Relations. The US-led "War on Terror" has focused on Muslim-majority countries and Muslim individuals inside and outside the United States through policies such as the 21st century invasions and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the detention and surveillance of Arabs and Muslims through the PATRIOT Act. Although most of the policies came into effect during the Republican administration of George W. Bush (2001-09), it is important to note that much of the groundwork for such policies had already been established. Furthermore, the "War on Terror" did not recede under Barack Obama's Democratic administration; indeed, certain elements, such as drone warfare, were significantly expanded. From 2009 to 2015, the Obama administration was responsible for 473 (mostly drone) strikes that allegedly killed between "2,372 and 2,581 terrorist 'combatants'" (Ackerman 2016). Despite claims surrounding the demise of "terrorist combatants", it is also argued that it is often difficult to confirm the identities and affiliations of individuals killed in drone strikes (Ackerman 2016). Obama claims that up to 116 civilians have been killed through this program, but this number has been widely criticized as under-representative (Ackerman 2016). *The Guardian* notes that, not only is this count agreed to be imprecise, this number does *not* include the civilian toll of drone strikes in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq (Ackerman 2016). The Bureau of Investigative Journalism argues that the civilian death toll of drone strikes could be as high as 800 in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia (Ackerman 2016). Other numbers cited for deaths caused by the drone program include 4,700 people as of 2013, as cited by Republican Senator Lindsey Graham (Ackerman 2016). There have also been well-known failures of the drone program, such as the strike in 2013 that killed 14 people celebrating

a wedding in Yemen (Almasmari 2013). It is no coincidence that the six countries named above are Muslim-majority countries in and around the Middle East and that stereotypes about Muslims – held even at the highest levels of scholarship and politics – play a role in informing policies such as the American drone warfare program.

The early actions of the Trump administration illustrate the ongoing importance of negative stereotypes about Muslims – particularly relating to assumptions about terrorism – in influencing the formulation of domestic and foreign policy and in stimulating widespread support for them (Scott 2017). Just one week into his presidency, on January 27, 2017, Trump signed an executive order to impose a temporary ban on immigration and travel from individuals from seven countries: Syria, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia. The proposed executive order "suspends the US refugee programme for 120 days and indefinitely halts acceptance of refugees from Syria"; however, the "ban does not apply to certain visa types, nor to religious minorities fleeing religious persecution from those countries – for example, Christians" (Allen et al. 2017). On February 3, 2017, federal court judge James Robart suspended Trump's executive order and deemed it unconstitutional; on February 9 an appeals court in San Francisco upheld the suspension, ruling against Trump (Allen et al. 2017). As of February 2017, the outcome of Trump's proposed legislation on immigration from these countries and the refugee program remained uncertain.

Despite the rhetoric of a "Muslim ban" during Trump's electoral campaign (e.g. see Berman 2015), some have argued that because the ban focuses on a particular set of countries, it is not a "Muslim ban". However, not only are all of these countries Muslim-majority and the ban does not apply to other religious groups, but Muslims from other origins have been turned away at the border – without the executive order currently being in effect. For example, as of February

10, 2017, at least five Canadians of Moroccan origin or descent – all of whom are holders of Canadian passports – had been refused entry into the United States, despite the fact that neither Morocco nor Canada is not on the list of countries banned in the proposed executive order (Canadian denied entry 2017). One of these individuals, Fadwa Alaoui, a Muslim woman who wears a *hijab*, notes that she was asked questions about her faith, her mosque, her imam, and her views on Trump (Rukavina 2017).

In sum, narratives and stereotypes about Muslims matter. Although Muslims are not the only "minority" group to be stereotyped and "othered" in popular culture – many groups have been and are subject to dehumanizing stereotypes – popular perceptions about Muslims are powerful in reflecting and shaping 21st century world politics. It is important to take an intersectional approach in addressing these stereotypes because race, gender, class, and sexual orientation intersect in powerful ways in producing "common sense" myths about Muslims. We cannot fully comprehend or account for dynamics of contemporary politics – such as the "War on Terror" or Trump's moves to limit immigration and travel to the United States – without paying attention to the role of popular culture in meaning-making in politics and society. That such policies appear to have broad appeal cannot be abstracted from the ubiquity of stereotypes of Muslims as villains and terrorists. Although "negative" stereotypes are accompanied by "positive" stereotypes, these remain limited in their ability to fully develop and humanize Muslims outside of the context of terrorism. Broad stereotypes collapse the distinctions between Islamic terrorists and everyday Muslims, as well as between diverse ethnic, religious, and national groups so that large sections of the American and global population are negatively impacted by both official policies and widely shared stereotypes. As such, popular perceptions

about Muslims have powerful consequences for global politics and society. Thus, it is important

to think critically about the relationship between popular culture and world politics.

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APPENDIX

Total Characters: 277

Trope	Total	% of total	"Middle-Eastern"[24] men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Villains	119	41%	91	12	6	5	5	0
Misc. – Negative	25	9%	23	0	0	0	2	0
"Good" Muslims	35	12%	29	4	0	0	2	0
Friendly Cultural Stereotype	7	2%	5	2	0	0	0	0
Victims	58	20%	30	26	1	1	0	0
Misc. – Positive	28	10%	11	11	0	1	2	3
Misc. – Minor	16	6%	11	3	2	0	0	0
TOTALS	**288**[25]	**100%**	**200**	**58**	**9**	**7**	**11**	**3**
% of total			**70%**	**20%**	**3%**	**2%**	**4%**	**1%**

These proportions are also illustrated in the chart below:

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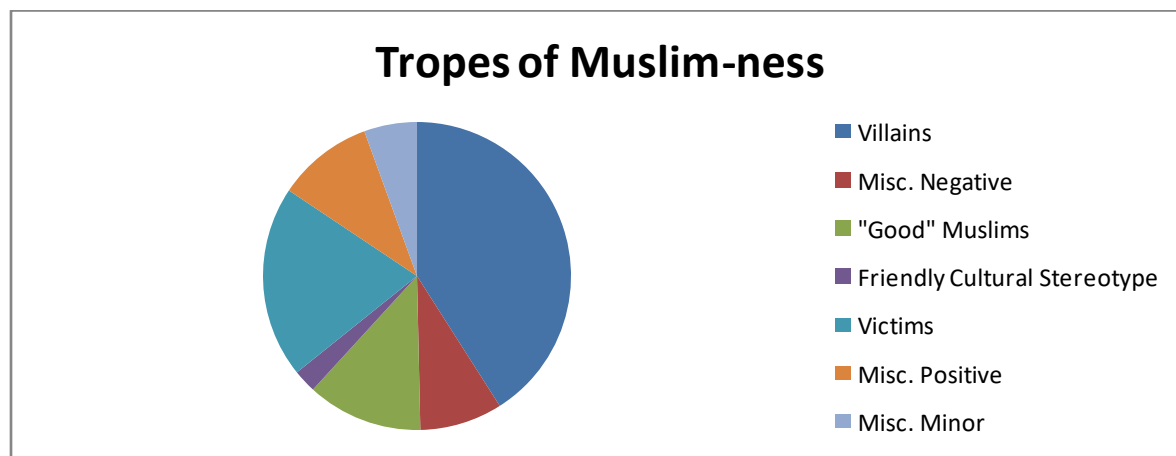
[24] "Middle-Eastern" is a deliberately broad and problematic term used because, as discussed at greater length in the dissertation, most of the programs racialize Muslims according to a constructed "Middle Eastern" identity that collapses everywhere from Morocco to Pakistan as of fairly homogenous "Middle-Eastern" provenance. This often includes fictional countries, which may be stand-ins for real countries, or composites thereof. Furthermore, "Middle-Eastern" characters are often played by actors of any background, most often of South Asian descent, who are deemed to fit the expectations of racially profiling Muslims. As such, because most programs do not distinguish between "brown"-skinned Muslims of varying origins and collapse them into the same group, it is not useful to try to distinguish the different origins here, especially because the origins of Muslim characters are sometimes unspecified and/or fictional. Specific origin is sometimes indicated in the show-specific listings below, if it is known and deemed to be meaningful.

[25] This number is higher than the total number of individual characters listed above the table because a small number of characters are cross-listed across more than one category.

Below is a listing of each program studied; a break-down of the prevalence of tropes of Muslim-ness in each other; and a detailed listing of characters according to stereotype, race, and gender.

24

Total: 67

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women
Villains	35	29	2	1	3
"Good" Muslims	12	10	2	0	0
Victims	13	9	4	0	0
Misc. – Negative	5	5	0	0	0
Misc. – Positive	3	1	2	0	0
Misc. – Neutral/Minor	6	4	2	0	0
TOTALS	**74**	**58**	**12**	**1**	**3**

Villains/Terrorists:

	"Middle-Eastern"	White
Male	-Mahmood Rashid Faheen -Syed Ali -Mohsen -Marko Khatami -Basheer -Omar (S2) -Tomas Sherek -Navi Araz -Kahlil Hassan -Omar (S4) -Tariq -Marwan Habib -Ali -Joseph Fayed -Yosik Khatami -Sabir Ardakani -Yassir -Hamri al-Assad (reformed/former) -Abu Fayed -Ahmed Amar -Nasir -Hasan Numair -Mohmar Habib -Farhad Hassan -Tarun -Samir -Marcos (White mother) -Naveed (reformed) -Kareem TOTAL: 29	-Ian Al-Harazi TOTAL: 1
Female	-Dina Araz	-Marie Warner

			-Margot Al-Harazi
	-Woman with wig		-Simone Al-Harazi
	TOTAL: 2		TOTAL: 3

"Good" Muslims:

	"Middle-Eastern"	White
Male	-Yusuf Auda (also victim) -Imam (S2) -Naji -Safa -Walid al-Razani (also victim) -Jibraan Al-Zarian (also victim) -Hamid Al-Zarian (also victim) -Imam (S7) -Omar Hassan (also victim) -Jamot TOTAL: 10	
Female	-Nabilla -Nadia Yassir (also victim) TOTAL: 2	

Victims:

	"Middle-Eastern"	White
Male	-Reza Nair (WD/RP*) -Yusuf Auda (also "Good" Muslim; WD/RP) -Behrooz Araz (youth) -Naseem (Dina's brother) -Man at bus stop (WD/RP) -Walid al-Razani (also "Good" Muslim; WD/RP) -Jibraan Al-Zarian (also "Good" Muslim; WD/RP) -Hamid Al-Zarian (also "Good" Muslim; WD/RP) -Omar Hassan (also "Good" Muslim) TOTAL: 9	
Female	-Nadia Yassir (also "Good" Muslim; WD/RP) -Kayla Hassan (also miscellaneous – positive) -Fara -Yasmine (child) TOTAL: 4	

*WD/RP: Western discrimination/racial profiling

Miscellaneous – Negative:

	"Middle-Eastern"	White
Male	-Prime Minister -Greeter at Mosque -Salim -Heydar -Ambassador (S06) TOTAL: 5	
Female		

Miscellaneous – Positive:

	"Middle-Eastern"	White
Male	-Nabil TOTAL: 1	
Female	-Dalia Hassan -Kayla Hassan (also victim) TOTAL: 2	

Miscellaneous – Neutral/Minor:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Deputy Prime Minister -Reza's father -Ambassador (S02) -Farhad Salim TOTAL: 4	
Female	-Reza's mother -Dina's sister TOTAL: 2	

Aliens in America

Total: 4

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White wen	White women
Friendly Cultural Stereotype	2	2	0	0	0
Misc. – Positive	2	0	2	0	0
Totals	**4**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**

Friendly Cultural Stereotype

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Raja (major character; Pakistani) -Ahmad (minor) TOTAL: 2	
Female		

Miscellaneous – Positive

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male		
Female	-Sadika Sadaqatmal (romantic interest of Raja's) -Dalwah Sadaqatmal (Sadika's mother) TOTAL: 2	

American Crime

Total: 2

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	White men	"Middle Eastern" women	White women	Other men	Other women
Misc. – Positive	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**

Miscellaneous – Positive:

	"Middle Eastern"	White	Other
Male			-Brother Timothy (African-American) Total: 1
Female			- Aliyah Shadeed (African-American) Total: 1

The Americans

Total: 5

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	White men	"Middle Eastern" women	White women
Villains	1	1	0	0	0
Misc. – Negative	3	3	0	0	0
Misc. – Neutral/Minor	1	1	0	0	0
Totals	**5**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Villains: Abbassin Zadran: male; "Middle Eastern"

TOTAL: 1

Miscellaneous – Negative:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Yousaf Rana (ambiguous; Pakistani Intelligence Agent) -Salar -Matteen TOTAL: 3	
Female		

Miscellaneous – Neutral/Minor: Javid Parvez (Yousaf's boss; male; "Middle Eastern")

TOTAL: 1

The Blacklist

Total: 1

Miscellaneous – Negative: Dembe Zuma (male; African from Sierra Leone)

TOTAL: 1

*Note: Samar Navabi, Meera Malik, and Aram Mojtabai are sometimes assumed to be Muslim, but their religious affiliation is not conclusively indicated in the program (the first two seasons).

Bones

Total: 9

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle-Eastern" women	White men	White women
Friendly Cultural Stereotype	3	2	1	0	0
Misc. Positive	2	2	0	0	0
Misc. Negative	4	4	0	0	0
Totals	**9**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**

Friendly Cultural Stereotype:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Arastoo Vaziri (recurring; Iranian) -Arastoo's father (Iranian) TOTAL: 2	
Female	-Arastoo's mother (Iranian) TOTAL: 1	

Miscellaneous Positive:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Hamid Vaziri (Iranian) -Hooshmand (Iranian) TOTAL: 2	
Female		

Miscellaneous Negative:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Majid Namazi (Iranian) -Sanjar Zaamani (Iranian) -Omid Turan (Iranian) -Yasser Kashani (Iranian) TOTAL: 4	
Female		

Community

Total: 3

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	White men	"Middle Eastern" women	White women
Victims	1	0	0	1	0
Misc. – Positive	1	1	0	0	0
Misc. – Negative	1	1	0	0	0
TOTALS	**3**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**0**

Miscellaneous – Positive: Abed Nadir (male; "Middle Eastern"; main character; half Palestinian)

TOTAL: 1

Miscellaneous – Negative: Gobi Nadir (male; "Middle Eastern" (Palestinian); Abed's father; domineering, controlling of Abed and Abra)

TOTAL: 1

Victims: Abra (female; "Middle Eastern"; Palestinian; Abed's cousin; wears burqa and is over-protected to the point of being forbidden from playing in the children's bouncy castle)

TOTAL: 1

The Grid

Total: 19

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle-Eastern" women	White men	White women
Villains	10	9	0	1	0
"Good" Muslims	2	2	0	0	0
Victims	6	4 (4)[26]	2	0	0
Misc. – Negative	1	1	0	0	0
TOTALS	**19**	**16 (4)**	**2**	**1**	**0**

Villains/Terrorists:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Dr. Raghib Mutar (Egyptian) -Yussef Nasseriah/"Muhammad" (major villain) -Allal Julaidin -Bashara -Masir -Akil Samoudi -Foukara -Raffi Moustafa (travel agent) -Agung TOTAL: 9	-Kaz Moore (Chechen American) TOTAL: 1

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[26] Number in brackets reflects the number of children/youths included in the total for that category.

Female		

"Good" Muslims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Raza Michaels (main character; Palestinian-American) -Hamid Samoudi TOTAL: 2	
Female		

Victims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Children with suicide vests TOTAL: 4	
Female	-Reem Mutar (Egyptian; beaten and killed) -Nili Michaels (Palestinian-American; Raza's sister; victim of invasion of her privacy) TOTAL: 2	

Miscellaneous – Negative: Omar Massif (Raza's cousin; male)

TOTAL: 1

Homeland

Total: 63

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle-Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Villains	31	23	4	2	1	1	0
"Good" Muslims	8	6	2	0	0	0	0
Victims	12	6 (3)	6	0	0	0	0
Misc. – Negative	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Misc. – Positive	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Misc. – Neutral/Minor	6	4	0	2	0	0	0
TOTALS	**64**	**45 (3)**	**13**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**0**

Villains/Terrorists:

	"Middle Eastern"	White	African-American
Male	-Hasan Ibrahim -Abu Nazir -M. M. -the real Langley bomber -Raqim Faisal (Saudi) -Majid Javadi (Iranian) -Danesh Akbari (Iranian) -Bassel (the tailor) -Afsal Hamid -Mansour Al-Zahrani (homosexual) -Latif bin Walid (Saudi)	-Nicholas Brody (reformed/former) TOTAL: 1	-Thomas Walker TOTAL: 1

	-Haissam Haqqani -Farhad Ghazi -Guard -Man with detonator (blows up child) -Al-Amin - Walid el-Khamis -Hajik Zayd -Ahmed Nazari -Bibi Hamed -Qasim (reformed) -Zahir -Dr. Aman Aziz TOTAL: 23		
Female	-Roya Hammad (Palestinian) -Nassrin Nazir -Tasneem -Fatima TOTAL: 4	-Aileen Morgan TOTAL: 1	

"Good" Muslims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Danny Galvez (half Lebanese) -Masud Sherazi (Iranian) -Azam Shah -Dr. Hussein -Samir Khalil -Esam (also victim) TOTAL: 6	
Female	-Fara Sherazi (Iranian) -Zahira Gohar TOTAL: 2	

Victims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Imam in Caracas -Issa Nazir (child) -Ayaan Ibrahim (youth) -Young boy made to wear suicide vest (child) -Esam (also "Good" Muslim) -Faisal Marwan TOTAL: 6	
Female	-Imam's wife (Caracas) -Fariba (Javadi's ex-wife) -Fatima Ali -Ayla (along with two other girls recruited by Fatima) -Amena Youssef -General Youssef's wife TOTAL: 6	

Miscellaneous – Negative:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Prince Farid bin Abbud (Saudi prince; "oily sheikh") -Imam Rafan Gohar -Sheikh Hafez Azizi -General Youssef TOTAL: 4	
Female		

Miscellaneous – Positive:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Rahim (Aayan's friend; Pakistani) -Aasar Khan (Pakistani) TOTAL: 2	
Female	-Kiran (Aayan's girlfriend; Pakistani) TOTAL: 1	

Miscellaneous – Neutral/Minor:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Omar (Kiran's father) -General Latif -Pakistani Minister -Fara's father TOTAL: 4	
Female	-Shatha Khalil -Jameela Nazari TOTAL: 2	

**Season 5: brief appearance by Lebanese ambassador; could be Christian, Muslim, or other; Turkish-German hacker Numan: religion never specified.

Lilyhammer

Total: 5

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women
Villains	1	0	0	1	0
Victims	2	1	0	1	0
Misc. – Neutral/Minor	2	1	1	0	0
TOTALS	**5**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**0**

Victims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White	Other
Male	-Yusuf TOTAL: 1	-Olav Backe/Abdulkarim TOTAL: 1	
Female			

Villains: Jan Johansen/Muhammad Abdul Aziz Ali (male; White convert; nearly carries out a suicide bombing)

Miscellaneous Neutral/Minor:

	"Middle Eastern"	White	Other
Male	-Rashid TOTAL: 1		
Female	-Yusuf's sister TOTAL: 1		

Lost

Total: 11

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women
Terrorists/Villains	6	6	0	0	0
Victims	2	0	2	0	0
Misc. – Positive	1	1	0	0	0
Misc. – Negative	2	2	0	0	0
TOTALS	**11**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**0**

Terrorists/Villains:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Omar (Iraqi Republican Guard) -Essam Tasir (Sayid's old roommate; terrorist) -Haddad (another terrorist) -Yusef (another terrorist) -Tariq -Ishmael Bakir TOTAL: 6	
Female		

Victims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male		
Female	-Nadia/Noor Abed Jazeem -Amira TOTAL: 2	

Miscellanous – Positive: Sayid Jarrah (main character; male; "Middle Eastern"; Iraqi)

TOTAL: 1

Miscellaneous – Negative:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Sami -Omer Jarrah (Sayid's brother)	

		TOTAL: 2	
Female			

Mr. Robot

Total: 1

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	White men	"Middle Eastern" women	White women	Other men	Other women
Misc. – Positive	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Miscellaneous – Positive: Trenton (female; "Middle Eastern"; Iranian; hacker; recurring but minor role)

TOTAL: 1

Shameless

Total: 2

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	White men	"Middle Eastern" women	White women	Other men	Other women
Misc. – Positive	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
Totals	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**

Miscellaneous – Positive:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Kash TOTAL: 1	
Female		-Linda TOTAL: 1

Sleeper Cell

Total: 31

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Terrorists/Villains	17	8	1	3	1	4	0
"Good" Muslims	7	5	0	0	0	2	0
Victims	4	2	2	0	0	0	0
Misc. – Positive	4	0	1	0	0	1	2
TOTALS	**32**	**15**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**7**	**2**

Terrorists/Villains:

	"Middle Eastern"	White	Other
Male	-Faris al-Farik/Saad bin Safwan (Saudi) -Abdullah "Bobby" Habib -Ziad -Salim - Karrar Bashir al Abbadi - Khalid Nur al-Din - Sarab Hassani -Dr. Aziz TOTAL: 8	-Christian Aumont (French) -Tommy Emerson -Ken Wells TOTAL: 3	-Ilija Korjenic (Bosnian) -Prison librarian (African-American) -Eddy Pangetsu (Indonesian) -Benito Vasquez (Latino) TOTAL: 4
Female	-Samia (supports husband's terrorism; also victim) TOTAL: 1	-Mina TOTAL: 1	

"Good" Muslims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White	Other
Male	-Sheikh Zayd Abdal Malik (also victim) -Lieutenant Hayat -Omar Hassani -Televangelist Imam -Yasser TOTAL: 5		-Darwyn Al-Sayeed (African-American; protagonist) -Adil (Bosnian) TOTAL: 2
Female			

Victims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White	Other
Male	-Sheikh Zayd Abdal Malik (also "Good" Muslim) -Khashul (youth) TOTAL: 2 (1)		
Female	-Samia (slapped by husband; killed in revenge feud; also villain) -Asma (child) TOTAL: 2 (1)		

Miscellaneous – Positive

	"Middle Eastern"	White	Other
Male			-Darwyn's Dad (African-American) TOTAL: 1
Female	-Farah TOTAL: 1		-Darwyn's Mom (African-American) -Leader at Islamic Centre women's meeting (African-American) TOTAL: 2

(The) Sopranos

Total: 2

Miscellanous – Negative:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Ahmed -Muhammad TOTAL: 2	
Female		

Tyrant

Total: 47

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	"Middle Eastern" women	White men	White women	Other men	Other women
Terrorists/Villains	17	14	3	0	0	0	0
"Good" Muslims	8	6	2	0	0	0	0
Victims	16	7 (1)	8	0	1	0	0
Misc. – Positive	4	2	2	0	0	0	0
Misc. – Negative	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Misc. – Neutral/Minor	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	**47**	**31 (1)**	**15**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**

Villains:

	"Middle-Eastern"	White
Male	-Jamal al-Fayeed -Khalid al-Fayeed -Yusuf -Ihab Rashid -Fahmy -Ali -Tareq -Ziad -Malick -Kasim -Abu Omar -Faisel -Mahmoud -Mahmoud's nephew TOTAL: 14	
Female	-Leila al-Fayeed -Samira -Jane Abbas (American) TOTAL: 3	

"Good" Muslims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Bassam "Barry" al-Fayeed -Fauzi -Marwan -Ahmos -Rami -Malick's father TOTAL: 6	
Female		

Victims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Hakim Batta (Nusrat's father) -Abdul (homosexual) -Hamid Mahfouz (husband of Jamal's rape victim) -Man who self-immolates (of regime) -Munir -Ghani (child) -Yasser (homosexual; loved ones killed by Caliphate) TOTAL: 7 (1)	
Female	-Nusrat -Jamal's "mistress" (rape victim) -Rima (housekeeper; of regime) -Jada (gas attack) -Malick's co-worker at bakery (of regime) -Dahliya (abducted; nearly raped) -Nusrat's mother (daughter raped by Jamal) -Jill (American; raped by husband) TOTAL: 8	-Amira al-Fayeed TOTAL: 1

Miscellaneous – Negative: Walid Rashid (male; "Middle-Eastern")

TOTAL: 1

Miscellaneous – Positive:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Sheikh Rashid -Ahmed TOTAL: 2	
Female	-Nasrin -Halima -Ru'a -Nusrat's doctor TOTAL: 4	

Miscellaneous – Neutral/Minor: Amir (part of Rashid delegation; male; "Middle-Eastern")

TOTAL: 1

The War at Home

TOTAL: 3

Trope	Total	"Middle-Eastern" men	White men	"Middle Eastern" women	White women	Other men	Other women
Villains	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Victims	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Friendly Cultural Stereotype	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Misc. – Positive	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	**5**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Villains: Kenny's Dad (male; "Middle-Eastern"; Iranian; rejects son because he is gay; forbids wife to see son)

TOTAL: 1

Victims:

	"Middle Eastern"	White
Male	-Khaleel Nazeeh "Kenny" Al-Bahir (Iranian; also Misc. – Positive) TOTAL: 1	
Female	-Kenny's mom (Iranian; prevented from seeing her son by her controlling husband; also Friendly Cultural Stereotype) TOTAL: 1	

Friendly Cultural Stereotype: Kenny's mom (female; "Middle-Eastern"; Iranian; also victim)

TOTAL: 1

Miscellaneous – Positive: Khaleel Nazeeh "Kenny" Al-Bahir (Iranian; also victim; transcends Muslim stereotype, though primarily as a gay stereotype)

Whoopi

Total: 1

Friendly Cultural Stereotype: Nasim (male; "Middle-Eastern"; Iranian; major character)

TOTAL: 1

The Wire

Total: 1

Miscellaneous Negative: Brother Mouzone (male; African-American)

TOTAL: 1